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When the Russians Blinked: The U.S. Maritime Response to the Cuban Missile Crisis

by
Major John M. Young
United States Marine Corps Reserve

Occasional Paper

HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

1990

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Foreword

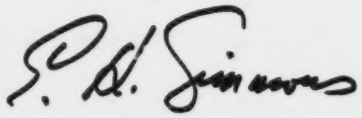
The History and Museums Division publishes as "Occasional Papers" for limited distribution, various studies, theses, compilations, bibliographies, monographs, and memoirs, as well as proceedings of selected workshops, seminars, symposia, and similar colloquia, which it considers to be of significant value for audiences interested in Marine Corps history. These occasional papers, which are selected for their intrinsic worth, must reflect structured research, present a contribution to historical knowledge not readily available in published sources, and reflect original thought and content on the part of the author, compiler, or editor. It is the intent of the division that these occasional papers be distributed to selected institutions, such as service schools, Department of Defense historical agencies, and directly concerned Marine Corps organizations, so the information contained therein will be available for study and exploitation.

When the Russians Blinked: The U.S. Maritime Response to the Cuban Missile Crisis is the thesis written by Major John M. Young, USMCR, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master of arts degree, which he received in 1989 at the University of Tulsa. Most of his research into Marine Corps documentation was conducted at the Marine Corps Historical Center in the Washington Navy Yard.

Major Young is a native Oklahoman who graduated from Sapulpa High School, the University of Oklahoma (1972), and the University of Oklahoma College of Law (1974), from which he received the degree of juris doctor. He served as a Marine Corps judge advocate from 1975 to 1979, following which he transferred to the Marine Corps Reserve. Major Young is a practicing attorney in Sapulpa and active in local civic affairs. He is a member of a number of professional legal and military societies and is currently the logistics officer for the Marine Corps Mobilization Station at Oklahoma City.

This paper concerns the period in October 1962, when U.S. aerial surveillance revealed that the Cubans were busily setting up sites for missiles delivered to Cuba by the U.S.S.R. Major Young notes that surprisingly little has been written about the military response to the Cuban Missile Crisis, as it became known. In conducting his research, the author was able to have declassified many formerly top secret operations plans and command diaries of U.S. Navy and Marine Corps units which, as he writes, "formed the core of a massive quarantine and planned invasion force that was larger than the Allied invasion force on D-Day" in 1944. Major Young traces the history of the U.S.-Cuban relationship over the years, and the Kennedy Administration's response to the discovery of nuclear missiles in Cuba targeted at the United States. He also analyzes naval planning by a study of applicable maps, intelligence reports, and troop deployment orders for a contingency aimed at Cuba. Finally, the author discusses the probable effect on Russian leaders of an American invasion of Cuba and a quarantine of Soviet vessels bound for Cuba. Major Young concludes his paper with an assessment of the effects that the crisis continues to have on relationships with Cuba and Latin America as a whole.

The History and Museums Division believes that this occasional paper is a significant addition to the literature of the event. In pursuit of accuracy, we welcome comments on this publication from interested individuals and activities.



EDWIN H. SIMMONS
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THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

WHEN THE RUSSIANS BLINKED: THE U.S. MARITIME RESPONSE TO THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

by

John Mark Young

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Discipline of History
The Graduate School
The University of Tulsa
1989

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T H E U N I V E R S I T Y O F T U L S A

T H E G R A D U A T E S C H O O L

WHEN THE RUSSIANS BLINKED

THE U.S. MARITIME RESPONSE TO THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Young, John Mark (Master of Arts in History)

When the Russians Blinked: The U.S. Maritime Response to the Cuban Missile Crisis (236 pp. - Chapter XIII)

Directed by Dr. Thomas H. Buckley

(150 Words)

Surprisingly very little has been written about the military response to the Cuban Missile Crisis. The author, a major in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, has obtained the declassification of many formerly top secret operations plans and command diaries of U.S. Navy and Marine Corps units which, in less than a week, formed the core of a massive quarantine and planned invasion force that was larger than the Allied invasion force on D-Day.

This paper traces the history of the United States' relationship with Cuba and our response to the discovery of nuclear missiles there targeted at our homeland. The naval planning for a Cuban contingency is analyzed through its actual implementation with the assistance of maps, intelligence reports, and troop deployments. The probable effect of the invasion plans on Soviet leaders and an assessment of the effects that the Crisis continues to have on U.S. policy toward Latin America are also discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is difficult to adequately acknowledge the contributions of all those who have helped to make this project a reality. Credit for the original idea must be given to Colonel Allan R. Millett, the prominent historian of the U.S. Marine Corps. If the finished product has any merit, it is certainly due to the patience, guidance, and inspiration of Dr. Thomas H. Buckley, my advisor and the chairman of my thesis committee at the University of Tulsa, Dr. Patrick Blessing, who "pulls double duty" as my commanding officer in the USMCR and Dr. Marvin Will, the University's Caribbean specialist. No research paper is any better than the research upon which it is based, and no researcher could hope for more helpful assistance than that provided by Henry Shaw and Joyce Bonnett at the Marine Corps Historical Archives. I must also thank my secretary, Becky Stair, who cheerfully burned almost as much "midnight oil" as the carrier Independence did during the Crisis to type draft after draft of the manuscript. Last, but far from least, I can never fully thank my wife, Debi, for her encouragement to "reach for my dream."

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CHAPTER I

U.S. - CUBA RELATIONS 1898-1962

In the middle of October 1962, New York City was still exulting in the victory of the seemingly indominatable New York Yankees over the San Francisco Giants at the World Series. Optimism was high at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory as the Ranger V spacecraft streaked into space, hoping to reach the moon after four previous failures. Arnold Palmer and Bob Hope exchanged quips at the Denham Golf Club near London promoting their new movie "Call Me Bwana."

On the evening of October 22, 1962, John F. Kennedy, America's most youthful president, announced his intention to address the nation. At 7:00 p.m., from the President's office, that address stunned the nation and caused the entire world to recoil in fear. In words that many Americans remember as if it were yesterday, President Kennedy announced:

> Good evening, my fellow citizens. This Government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the Soviet military buildup on the island of Cuba. Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere...
>
> ...We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril...
>
> ...To halt this offensive buildup, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All

> ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargos of offensive weapons, be turned back. This quarantine will be extended, if needed, to other types of cargo and carriers...
>
> ...It shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union..
>
> ...I have reinforced our base at Guantanamo...
>
> ...Under the Charter of the United Nations, we are asking tonight than an emergency meeting of the Security Council be convoked without delay to take action against this latest Soviet threat to world peace. Our resolution will call for the prompt dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive weapons in Cuba, under the supervision of the U.N. observers, before the quarantine can be lifted.
>
> ...The cost of freedom is always high--but Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender or submission.
>
> Our goal is not the victory of might, but the vindication of right--not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this hemisphere, and, we hope, around the world. God willing, that goal will be achieved.
>
> Thank you and good night. 1

The President's speech confirmed the worst suspicions of some that the Soviet Union had long been initiating a secret buildup of offensive missiles in Cuba. 2 The announcement came as a complete surprise to those who

1. Kennedy, John F. Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States 1982, U.S. Government Printing Office, Wash. D.C. 1963, pp. 806-9.

2. Sorensen, Theodore C., Kennedy, Harper and Row, New York, 1965 p. 672.

wanted to "wish" the world to peace. To the Soviet leadership in the Kremlin, there was anxiety that the missile site preparations had been discovered--and confusion about what to do now that their adversary had chosen to make the issue public.3

Without prior public warning, the world was at the brink of nuclear devastation that could have killed 100 million Americans, over 100 million Russians, and millions of Europeans. Never before in the history of the world had the possiblity of such swift and widespread destruction been so imminent. Never before had leaders of the world held the fate of civilization itself in the balance. Never before had two men had the awesome power to reduce so much of humanity to ashes.

In the month which followed the President's announcement, some Americans frantically constructed nuclear fallout shelters. World leaders struggled to somehow pull the world back from the trigger of war. The United States' armed forces planned a military operation that would have dwarfed the D-Day landings on June 6, 1944. Within hours of the command of the President of the United States, a quarter of a million servicemen from all the armed services as well as navy units from other countries of the Western Hemisphere would have launched an air, naval, and amphibious

3. Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House, Houghton Mifflins Co., Boston 1965, p. 820; Talbott, Strobe, ed., Khrushchev Remembers, Little, Brown, & Company, Boston 1970, p. 497

operation to attack and invade Cuba, an island only 90 miles from the southeastern tip of Florida.

In order to understand the military response to the crisis, an understanding of America's historical and strategic relationship with Cuba is essential. Americans are fond of sentimentally crediting their coup de main over western hemispheric security to the Monroe Doctrine in which their new country boldly asserted its authority to protect the Western Hemisphere from European domination. In an address to Congress on December 2, 1823 President James Monroe, the fifth president of the fledgling United States, in a message of "sheer braggadocio" proclaimed:

> [W]e should consider any attempt on their part [European countries or Russia] to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety... we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.4

Two avenues of advance into the Americas concerned President Monroe. The first was Russia's expansionary thrust on the northwest Pacific coast and the second was the expansion of their colonial interests in Latin America by the Spanish, French, and English. The British foreign

4. Buckley, Thomas H. and Strong, Edwin B. Jr., American Foreign and National Security Policies, 1914-1945 University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1987, p. 4.

secretary had invited the United States to join his country in opposing the expansion by any other colonial powers in Latin America. President Monroe and his Secretary of State, John Adams, decided it would be better for the United States to make a unilateral statement, knowing that British seapower would back-up the policy.5

Prior to that time, following European discovery, America had been developed primarily as British colonies and Cuba had been a Spanish colony. The United States proclaimed its independence in 1776 and won it by military action in 1781, but, by the end of the nineteenth century, Cuba still remained a Spanish colony under a harsh, exploitive colonial administration. By the end of the nineteenth century, America had consolidated its colonial expansion, and had achieved military power sufficient to challenge that of the former European colonial powers, even though it had not been exercised in any significant external capacity.

American foreign investment had also increased. By 1896 America's investment in Cuba had reached $50,000,000 and the following year its annual trade with Cuba was about $27,000,000.6 The political situation in Cuba, however, was tense. Inspired by the poet, Jose Marti, the efforts of

5. Sellers, Charles and May Henry, A Synopsis of American History, Rand McNally & Co., Chicago, 1969, pp. 103-4.

6. Smith, Robert F., The United States and Cuba: Business and Diplomacy, 1917-1960, Bookman Associates, New York, 1960, p.24

Cuban nationalist elements seeking independence from Spain escalated to war on February 24, 1895. Fighting spread throughout the island and Spain deployed more than two hundred thousand troops to subdue its colony. Both sides killed civilians and burned estates and towns, but the "yellow press" in the United States intensified the passions of Americans in sympathy with the nationalists to achieve independence from Spain. By 1898 commerical activity between the United States and Cuba had fallen to a standstill and a mysterious explosion aboard the U.S.S. Maine in Havana Harbor precipitated a chain of events that prompted the United States to declare war against Spain on April 25, 1898.

America's efforts on behalf of its tiny neighbor during the Spanish-American War are still preserved with popular reminiscences of Teddy Roosevelt's leading the First Regiment of the United States Calvary, nicknamed the "Rough Riders", in its victorious charge up San Juan Hill. Traditions of the U.S. Marine Corps are also well entrenched on the soil of Cuba. The first American casualties of the war in Cuba were two Marine privates involved in the action to seize Guantanamo Bay from Spanish forces. The United States Navy had blockaded Havana Harbor and pursued the elusive Spanish fleet, finally bottling it up in Santiago Bay, 40 miles west of Guantanamo.7 The decision was made to establish a base

7. McNeal, Herbert P., Lt. Cmdr. USNR, "How the Navy Won Guantanamo Bay", Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 79, June 1953, pp. 615-9

at Guantanamo Bay and a battalion of Marines from Key West joined the fleet off Santiago. The Marines landed on June 10, 1898 and embarked on a land campaign which would soon seize the Well of Cuzco which provided the only fresh water to Guantanamo City. During this action Sergeant John H. Quick earned the Medal of Honor by bravely exposing himself to enemy fire in order, with his back to the enemy, to signal the U.S.S. Dolphin offshore to provide naval gunfire support. Guantanamo Bay was soon occupied and, after the surrender at Santiago, was used as a base to launch the U.S. invasion of Puerto Rico 500 miles to the east.

Five years later in 1903 the United States and Cuba formally approved a treaty lease agreement establishing a U.S. naval base at Guantanamo, whose value to the Navy to control Caribbean sea lanes soon became obvious. Over a half century later the naval base at Guantanamo the focus of worldwide attention in the United States' efforts to secure the removal of offensive weapons from Cuba.

The motivation behind America's assistance to the cause of Cuban independence in the Spanish-American war has been long debated. Many have accused America of surreptitiously intending to exploit Cuba by securing its independence from Spain, but some historians, particularly Samuel Flagg Bemis, strongly assert that America's true intention was to assist Cuba in obtaining independence from Spain; insuring its proper development as a nation free from meddling or interference by foreign, particularly European, powers; and

by assisting it in establishing a constitutional legal framework for government.8

Cuba won its independence on January 1, 1899 and self rule began under the U.S. military occupation of General John Brook who had accepted the Spanish surrender. A resolution of Congress passed on April 20, 1898 inserted the Platt Amendment into the Cuban constitution which granted America the right to intervene in the internal affairs of Cuba, to oversee international commitments, dominate the economy, intervene in internal affairs, and establish a naval station at Guantanamo Bay.

American military occupation did restore normality. Americans built schools, roads, bridges, deepened Havana Harbor, paved streets, repaired and extended the telephone and telegraph systems, started sewer works, and made significant advances against yellow fever. The intent of the military occupation authorities was to prepare the island for incorporation into the United States.

America's naval interest in the Caribbean was also awakening at the turn of the century. The U.S. Navy had grown along with America's merchant shipping. Spurred by such far-thinking navalist thinkers as Capt. Alfred Thayer Mahan, public opinion became more aware of the need for an isthmusiah canal, not only to expedite maritime commerce but

8. Bemis, Samuel Flagg, The Latin American Policy of the United States: An Historical Interpretation, W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., New York, 1943, pp. 128-141

also to facilitate the rapid shifting of naval fleets between Atlantic and Pacific theaters. 9 As interest in the maritime and security implications in the Caribbean increased, so did interest in the land countries and governments in the region.

On September 14, 1901 Teddy Roosevelt succeeded to the presidency when President William McKinley was assassinated. Twice during his tenure European powers threatened to intervene in Latin America. To meet a threat of possible permanent intervention Roosevelt and Secretary of State Elihu Root framed a policy in 1904 that became known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. Under the Roosevelt Corollary, the United States eagerly assumed the role that the public now so often disdains. As "world policeman" the United States undertook to maintain law and order in Latin America and to guarantee that Latin American nations met their international obligations. This policy prohibited non-American intervention in Latin American affairs, but asserted the right of the United States to do so. In the early part of the Twentieth Century, the United States' Latin American neighbors received, either willingly or unwillingly, the assistance of U.S. Marines in forming and managing their governments.10

9. Mahan, Alfred Thayer, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1600-1783, Little, Brown, and Co., Boston 1897 p.88

10. Langley, Lester D., Central America: The Real Stakes Crown Publishers Inc., New York, 1985, pp.3-17

In the decades following World War I, America's vast economic potential depended on surplus production and export for its vitality, the proceeds of which could best be sold and invested abroad. American business thus developed a vested interest in the stability of Latin America which became an important market for the American economy. 11 America's policies toward Cuba prior to 1959 were bittersweet. America was often very generous in extending loans for economic development to Cuba and in granting extensions in the repayment of those loans. Along with the loans, however, came "big stick" economic coercion to insure eventual debt repayment. The unfortunate result was a growing anti-American sentiment among the Cuban people. To appease this sentiment, America finally agreed to abrogate the Platt Amendment by treaty on May 29, 1934, thus demonstrating some cautious confidence in Cuban nationalism. Although left largely to "chart" their own course, the Cuban governments which emerged were fraught with problems.

The Cuban people's patience with their corrupt, mal-administered governments finally climaxed with the defeat of the dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959. The victor was the charismatic revolutionary leader, Fidel Castro, who had led guerilla forces for the two years that it took to overthrow the Batista government. At first the course of the revolution was unclear and the United States courted Castro's

11. Smith, The United States and Cuba: Business and Diplomacy, pp.33-7

good graces. But Castro permitted no elections and the only political organization in the country was modeled after that of communist nations.

Finally, the nationalization of hundreds of millions of dollars of U.S.-owned property brought the undisguised hostility of the American government. The United States reduced its sugar quota in 1960, followed with a total trade embargo, and in January, 1961 severed diplomatic relations. Some have argued that America should have done more "soul searching" of its own to understand that some of the hostility toward America was the inevitable result of its own "big stick" economic policies, but the fact remains that Cuba pursued a policy of direct antagonism toward the United States and embraced aid and political and military ties with the Soviet Union and its eastern bloc allies.12

Through the covert efforts of the Central Intelligence Agency sponsored by the popular Eisenhower administration, in the 1950's the United States had been successful in overthrowing the governments of a number of under-developed countries which were unfriendly or acting inimically to United States' interests.13 In 1953 the C.I.A. had assisted the Shah of Iran to return to power after an overbearing and eccentric prime minister unfriendly to

12. Plank, John N., "The United States and Cuba: Cooperation, Coexistence, or Conflict," A chapter in The Restless Caribbean by Richard Millett and W. Marvin Will, ed., Praeger Publishers, New York, 1978, pp.117-31

13. Wise, David and Ross, Thomas B., The Invisible Government, Bantam Books, New York, 1964, 116-121, 177-96

the West had seized control.14 His appetite for covert operations whetted, President Eisenhower then authorized the C.I.A. to depose the left-leaning elected president of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz, in 1954.15 Engulfed in what had been described as a "clandestine mentality," a mind-set that thrives on secrecy and deception, 16 the Eisenhower administration also authorized the formulation of "Operation Zapata", an attack by a force of C.I.A.-trained Cuban exiles upon their homeland at the Bahia De Cochinos (Bay of Pigs).17 Before the operation could be implemented, however, Eisenhower's term expired and the term of President Kennedy began.

President Kennedy inherited the plan on January 20, 1961 when he was briefed on the operation by the C.I.A. as president-elect in Palm Beach. He could have cancelled the plan, but, as his special counsel, Theodore C. Sorensen, notes, he was under tremendous pressure to continue:

> But the CIA authors of the landing plan not only presented it to the new President, but as was perhaps natural, advocated it. He was in effect asked whether he was as willing as the Republicans

14. Pahlavi, Mohammed Rega, Answer to History, Stein and Day, New York, 1980, p. 91

15. Schlesinger, Stephen, and Kinzer, Stephen, Bitter Fruit, Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1982, pp.159-72

16. Marchetti, Victor and Marks, John D., The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence, Dell Publishing Co., New York,1980, p.5.

17. Higgins, Trumbull, The Perfect Failure: Kennedy, Eisenhower, and the C.I.A. at the Bay of Pigs, W.W. Norton & Co. New York, 1987.

> to permit and assist these exiles to free their own island from dictatorship, or whether he was willing to liquidate well-laid preparations, leave Cuba free to subvert the hemisphere, disband an impatient army in training for nearly a year under miserable conditions, and have them spread the word that Kennedy had betrayed their attempt to depose Castro. Are you going to tell this 'group of fine young men,' as Allen Dulles posed the question later in public, 'who asked nothing other than the opportunity to try to restore a free government in their country...ready to risk their lives...that they would get no sympathy, no support, no aid from the United States?' Would he let them choose for themselves between a safe haven in this country and a fighting return to their own, or would he force them to disband against their wishes, never to be rallied again?18

Kennedy would later complain bitterly about his advisers that "the first advice I'm going to give my successor is to watch the generals and to avoid feeling that just because they were military men their opinions on military matters were worth a damn".19 The invasion force was a highly motivated band of Cuban exiles intent on overthrowing the Castro government in favor of a democratic form of government. Known as Brigade 2506, the unit consisted of approximately 1,500 Cuban exiles who were trained by the C.I.A. in highly secret training camps in Guatemala. The invasion force was even supported by an air force consisting of C-46 and C-54 transport aircraft and a few B-26 medium bombers. 20

18. Sorensen, Kennedy, pp. 295-6

19. Higgins, The Perfect Failure, p.167

20. An excellent summary of the military aspects of the operation is available at the Command and Staff Library of the U.S. Marine Corps., English, Joe R., Maj. USMC, "The Bay

At a routine weekly press conference on April 12, 1961, in response to a question, President Kennedy stated his policy toward Cuba. That statement was later to hamper his freedom of action during the actual Bay of Pigs invasion:

> First, I want to say that there will not be, under any conditions, an intervention in Cuba by the United States armed forces. This government will do everything it possibly can, and I think it can meet its responsibilities, to make sure that there are no Americans involved in any actions inside Cuba... The basic issue is not one between the United States and Cuba. It is between the Cubans themselves. I intend to see that we adhere to that principle and as I understand it, this administration's attitude is so understood and shared by the anti-Castro exiles from Cuba in this country.21

The actual invasion struck in the early morning hours of April 17, 1961 when a force of 1,443 exiles landed on the southern shores of Cuba. They established a beachhead against overwhelming numbers of Cuban forces and held it for 3 days. The brigade imposed a 10 to 1 kill ratio on the Castro forces, losing only 114 men during the invasion while the Castro forces lost approximately 1,250 men. Because of President Kennedy's pledge, he refused to order air support or logistical support from the naval carrier task forces offshore and, without the air support and the popular uprising predicted by the C.I.A., the operation was doomed to failure. Eventually, a total of 1,189 men of the Brigade

20. cont. of Pigs: A Struggle for Freedom", Student Thesis, James Carson Breckenridge Library Marine Corps Command & Staff College, Marine Corps Development & Education Command, Quantico, Va. 1984.

21. Kennedy, Public Papers of the President, 1962, p. 258

became Castro's prisoners. One hundred and fourteen had died in the swamps and around 150 made their way to safety in one way or another.22 On April 8, 1962, following a four day trial, the men of Brigade 2506 were sentenced to thirty years imprisonment. Eventually, ransom was paid for their release, and on Christmas Eve, 1962, the last planeload of prisoners landed in Miami.

In the inevitable investigation which always follows in the wake of a military debacle, General David Shoup, the Commandant of the Marine Corps who was to serve President Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis and who possessed vast experience in amphibious operations from Tarawa in World War II, complained that the clandestine operation was so secret that he did not have absolute and complete knowledge about it and was only asked his opinion about which of three potential landing sites was preferable.23 The United States Marines, the nation's military force most experienced in the conduct of amphibious operations, was not consulted at all in the detailed planning of the operation.

For this and a host of other reasons beyond the scope of this paper, the effort was a dismal failure. President Kennedy admitted his mistake to the nation in a radio/television interview on November 16, 1962, 24 but, eulogized the sacrifices of the Brigade when they returned to

22. English, "Bay of Pigs", p. 88

23. Operation Zapata: The "Ultrasensitive" Report and Testimony of the Board of Inquiry on the Bay of Pigs, University Publications of America, 1981, p. 249

the United States.25 That failure was also to plague the Kennedy administration during its conduct of the Cuban Missile Crisis only eighteen months later.

Much has been written analyzing the political and strategic implications of the Cuban Missile crisis. Largely because most military aspects of the Cuban contingency planning have until recently remained classified, very little has been written analyzing the military operation planned to attack and invade Cuba. Many of these records are now available under the Freedom of Information Act.

The world remembers the naval quarantine of Cuba as the successful means used to pressure the Soviets to remove their missiles. But arrayed behind the picket line of ships was an air/ground invasion force that threatened not only to neutralize the missile sites, but also to remove the communist government of Fidel Castro, then the communists' only prospect of a toehold in the Western Hemisphere.

This paper, based largely on formerly classified military operational plans, orders, and records, and command diaries, will concentrate on the operations and planning of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps to implement the President's declared quarantine of Cuba and an invasion of the island if ordered.

24. American Foreign Policy Current Documents 1962, Reflections on U. S. Policy During the Cuban Missile Crisis: Replies made by the President (Kennedy) to Questions Asked on the Television-Radio Interview "After Two Years--A Conversation With the President," December 16, 1962 (Exerpts) U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1962, pp. 469-71

25. American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1962 "Some Day the People of Cuba Will Have a Free Chance to Make a Free Choice:" Remarks Made by the President (Kennedy) to the Cuban Invasion Brigade, Miami, December 29, 1962 (Exerpts), U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962, pp. 471-3

CHAPTER II

PROBING THE TIGER

At 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning, October 16, 1962 President Kennedy, scanning the morning newspapers in his bedroom, was interrupted by his National Security Adviser, McGeorge Bundy, who informed him that intelligence analysts at the C.I.A. believed that the Soviet Union was constructing medium range missile bases in Cuba.1 Bundy had been briefed at his home the previous evening by top C.I.A. officials of their conclusions. Kennedy took the news calmly, but was surprised and angry at Khrushchev's efforts to deceive him.

The President requested a private briefing on the matter to be followed by a briefing to a list of officials which he asked Bundy to summon. At 11:00 a.m. the private briefing was conducted by the C.I.A.'s deputy director, General Marshall Carter, who spread enlarged U-2 reconnaissance flight photographs before the President. The evidence was unequivocal. The missiles were there, they had nuclear capability, they had a range sufficient to reach most of the United States, and they would shortly be operational.

The formal meeting of the invited staff members began at 11:45 a.m. in the cabinet room. The ad hoc group present would later be called the "Executive Committee" of the National Security Council (ExComm) and included:

1. Sorensen, Kennedy, p. 673

State: Secretary Dean Rusk, Under Secretary George Ball, Latin-American Assistant Secretary Edwin Martin, Deputy Under Secretary Alexis Johnson and Soviet expert Llewellyn Thompson. (Participating until departing for his new post as Ambassador to France the following night was Charles "Chip" Bohlen.)

Defense: Secretary Robert McNamara, Deputy Secretary Roswell Gilpatric, Assistant Secretary Paul Nitze and General Maxwell Taylor (newly appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff).

C.I.A.: On the first day, Deputy Director Carter; thereafter (upon his return to Washington), Director John McCone.

Other: Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon, White House aides Bundy and Sorensen. (Also sitting in on the earlier and later meetings in the White House were the Vice President and Kenneth O'Donnell. Others--such as Dean Acheson, Adlai Stevenson and Robert Lovett--sat in from time to time, and six days later USIA Deputy Director Donald Wilson, acting for the ailing Edward R. Murrow, was officially added.)2

Robert Kennedy admitted rather candidly following the briefing that what the photo intelligence experts insisted were missile bases under construction in a field near San Cristobal appeared to be nothing more than the clearing of a field for a farm or the basement of a house. Everyone else, including the President himself, had the same initial reaction. 3

At this point President Kennedy must have felt some of the despair once experienced by the prophet Job who lamented that "[t]he thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me." 4 The President was in the midst of a fierce congressional election campaign

2. Ibid., pp. 674-5

3. Kennedy, Robert F., Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis, New American Library, New York, 1968, p. 24

4. Job 3:25

a scant three and a half weeks away. The administration was under sharp attack by many critics. Led by Senator Kenneth Keating, a Republican from New York, they charged that the Kennedy administration had been weak in combating communism in Cuba. Particularly, in a manner which Senator Keating never disclosed, he had learned that the Soviets were installing surface to air missiles (SAM's) similar to those which shot down Gary Powers' U-2 earlier during the Eisenhower administration while flying a reconnaissance mission over Soviet territory.5 Others, such as Senator Homer Capehart of Indiana were urging that the United States take direct military action against Cuba.

Robert Kennedy had previously expressed the President's deep concern over the Soviet military build-up in Cuba to their ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin, who assured the attorney general that there would be no ground-to-ground missiles or offensive weapons placed in Cuba. He further asserted that the Cuban build-up was nothing of significance and that, during the period prior to the election, Khrushchev would do nothing to disrupt the relationship of the two countries because he "liked President Kennedy and did not wish to embarrass him."6 This informal pledge was in keeping with what has been described as an unwritten "rule" of the game of super-power diplomacy that both

5. Keating, Sen. Kenneth, Congressional Record, 88th Cong. 2d Sess., Vol. 108, pp. 18359-18361.

6. Kennedy, Robert F., Thirteen Days, pp. 25-6

parties must recognize the legitimacy of leadership of the other and not seek to undermine the other's leadership. This unwritten rule has in fact been observed by both sides since Stalin's death during such crises in leadership as the ultimate deposition of Khrushchev following the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Johnson administration's consuming fixation with Vietnam, the collapse of Nixon's authority as a result of Watergate, and the paralysis of the Kremlin resulting from the illness and death of three Soviet leaders in quick succession within less than three years. 7

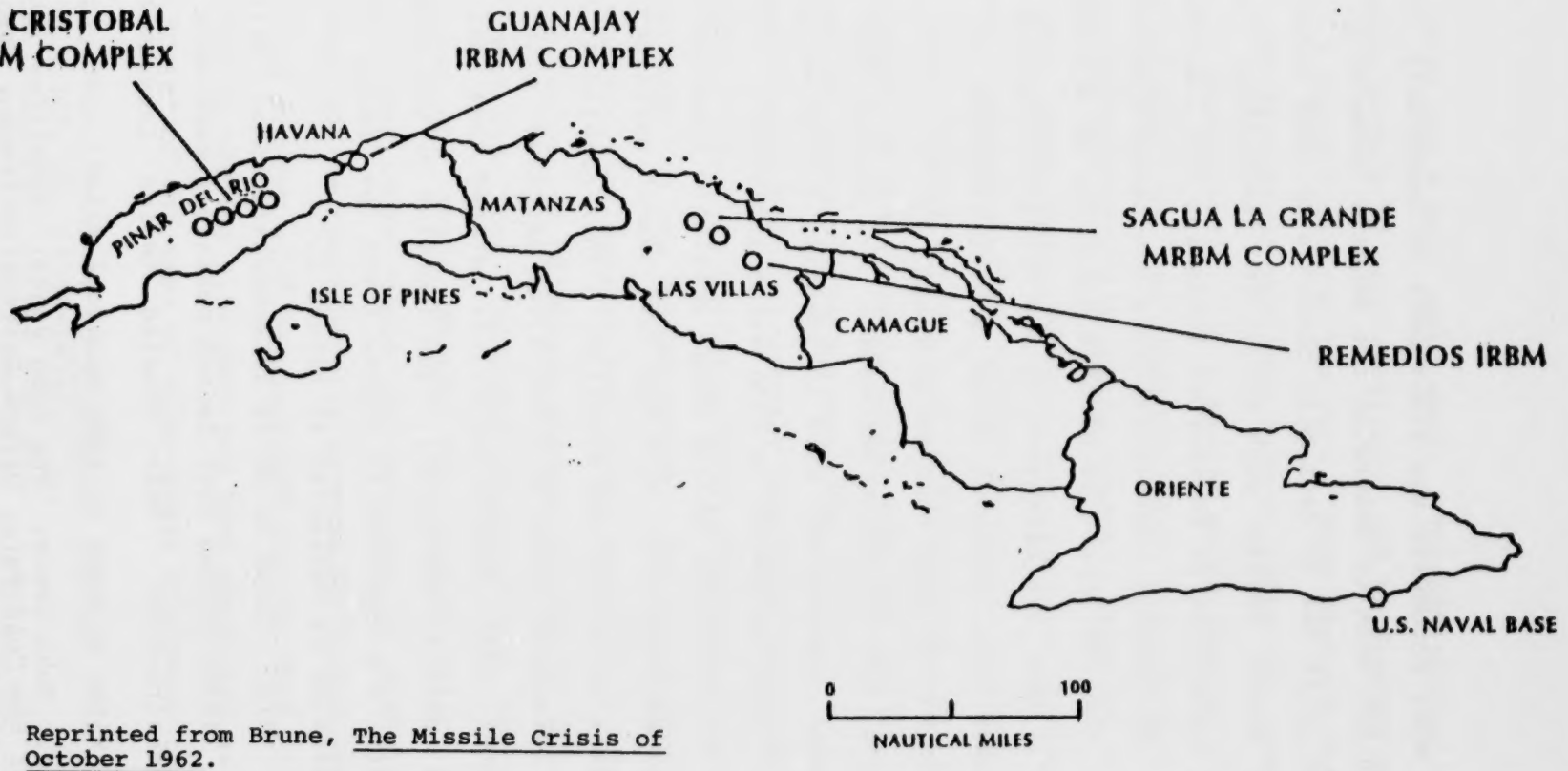
During the following two weeks, U-2 photos and other intelligence operations were to identify a wide variety of Soviet military equipment in Cuba which included:

1. Six sites for medium range ballistic missiles (MRBM) were under construction. Each had four launch positions which were capable of firing two missiles. This totaled 48 MRBM's with an effective range of 1,000-2,000 nautical miles. In its October 28th report the C.I.A. stated that all MRBM launchers were in operation. The location of the IRBM and MRBM sites are depicted in Figure 1 and the range of the Soviet missiles is reflected in Figure 2.

2. Three fixed sites of intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBM) having four launch positions each were also under construction. This totaled twelve launchers for missiles with a range of 2200 nautical miles. On October

7. Gaddis, John Lewis, The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War, Oxford University Press, New York, 1987, pp. 242-3

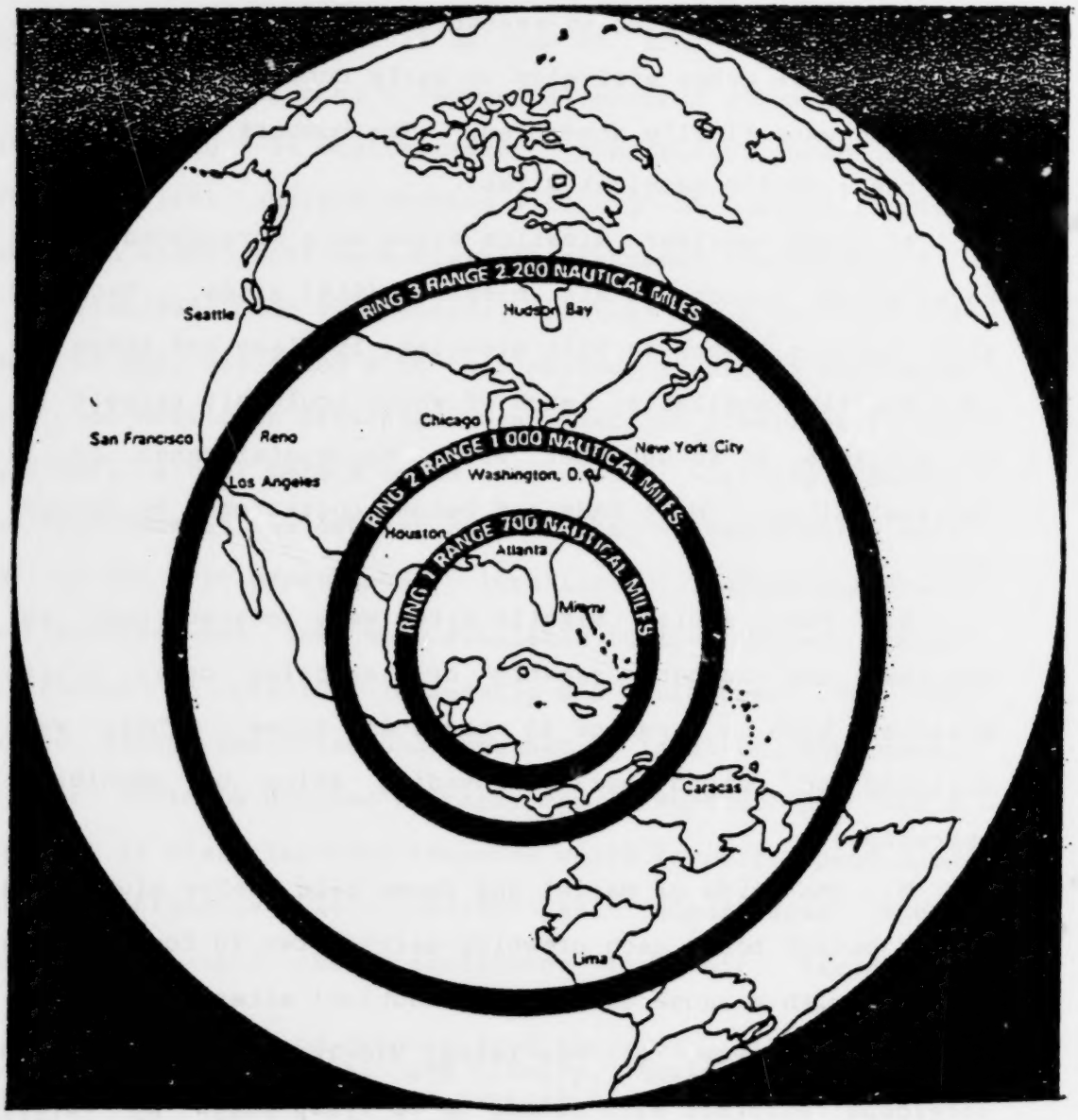
LOCATION OF MRBM AND IRBM SITES IN CUBA



Reprinted from Brune, The Missile Crisis of October 1962.

FIGURE 1

Range of Soviet Missiles



Reprinted from Brune, The Missile Crisis of October 1962

FIGURE 2

25th, the C.I.A. estimated that one base would be operational by December 1st, and the other two by December 15th. However, no IRBM warheads reached Cuba.

3. Forty-two two un-assembled IL-28 (Beagle) bombers arrived at two Cuban airfields in early October, only seven of which were finally assembled. The bombers had a round-trip range of 600 nautical miles.

4. The nuclear missiles sites were surrounded by a total of 24 surface to air missile (SAM) sites. Each SAM site had six launchers with missiles in place and three re-load missiles available, each of which could hit targets at an altitude of 80,000 feet with a horizontal range of 30 nautical miles. Most SAMs had become operational by October 23rd.

5. Four cruise missile sites were located near key beaches and harbors capable of launching naval cruise missiles with a range of 40 nautical miles. These were designed to defend against invading ships or amphibious operations.

6. The ports of Mariel and Banes held twelve high-speed KOMAR patrol boats each of which carried two 20 foot cruise missiles with a range of 10 to 15 nautical miles.

7. Forty-two of the latest MIG-21 jets designed to intercept aircraft with speeds up to 1,000 knots at 40,000 feet equipped with air to air missiles had been delivered. Additionally, Cuba had received 40 MIG-15s and MIG-17s prior to July, 1962.

8. By October approximately 22,000 Soviet soldiers and technicians were estimated to be stationed in Cuba to assemble, operate, and defend the Soviet missiles. Soviet infantry were stationed in defense of four major missile installations including a regimental armored group equipped with 35 to 40 T-54 medium tanks, free rocket over-ground (FROG) tactical nuclear rockets with a 20-25 nautical mile range and modern anti-tank missiles nicknamed the SNAPPER.8

President John F. Kennedy, on that day a youthful 45 years of age, was faced with the greatest strategic challenge that had ever been presented to an American president in the Cold War, either before or to date since. Sitting before the President in the cabinet room on that autumn morning were some of the most experienced, intelligent, influential--and over-bearing--men that were available to the United States government to provide leadership and guidance. How the United States would respond, whether by inaction, diplomacy, or war would be decided by these men. Whether they would succeed in their intended response would largely depend upon their confidence in leading and supervising their subordinates and their confidence in their respective

8. C.I.A. reports of October 23rd thru 28th, 1962, ExComm National Security Files, JFK Library, Boxes 315-316. CIA reports for October 1962 are available on microfilm; Paul Kesaris, ed., "C.I.A. Research Reports: Latin America, 1946-1976." University Publications, Frederick, Md:, 1982. Portions of the C.I.A. reports of October 21st, 25th, 26th, are in Dan Caldwell, Missiles in Cuba: A Decision-Making Game Learning Resources in International Studies, New York, 1979, pp. 5-20.

positions. The man who would ultimately bear the responsibility for the consequences was the President of the United States. Whether he would be the clerk of these talented, forceful men or their leader would depend upon his personal ability to project his influence to them and to the world. 9

At the conclusion of the first meeting, President Kennedy directed that more aerial reconnaissance missions be conducted. The film taken by high altitude and low altitude reconnaissance planes would total more than 25 miles in length. 10 The President also ordered that those present set aside all other tasks to make a prompt and intensive survey of the dangers and all possible courses of action and enjoined everyone to the strictest secrecy until both the facts and the United States response could be announced. Giving the surface impression that nothing was amiss, the President continued to make scheduled public appearances.

The most perplexing questions in the next few days was why the Soviets had embarked upon such a risky, unprecedented venture to station nuclear missiles in close proximity to America. As recently as September 19th, the United States Intelligence Board had issued a national intelligence estimate which concluded that the Soviet Union did not intend to place offensive missiles in Cuba. The Kremlin had never

9. Neustadt, Richard E., Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1960, p.2

10. Sorensen, Kennedy, p. 68

even stationed missiles in Warsaw Pact nations and the board believed the Soviets would consider Fidel Castro too unstable to be trusted with them. 11 The lone dissenter in this conclusion was the Central Intelligence Director, John McCone, who, as late as August 29th, had been the only Kennedy official who believed that Khrushchev's plans went beyond the construction of SAM bases. However, throughout September he had been honeymooning on the French Riviera and it is probable that the U.S. intelligence operation had been affected by his absence. Because, however, he was such an ardent anti-communist, many did not give serious consideration to his opinions and he was perceived to be a devil's advocate whose warnings on Soviet intentions were routinely down-graded by both his colleagues and by the President.

During their deliberations, ExComm advanced five theories to explain the Soviets' motives in placing the missiles in Cuba. Graham Allison in his classic, Essence of Decision, 12 and others have identified and expounded upon the five hypotheses.13 The theories and a brief explanation of each follows:

11. Brune, Lester H., The Missile Crisis of October 1962: A Review of Issues and References, Regina Books, Claremont, Calif., 1985, pp. 38-9

12. Allison, Graham T., Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, Little Brown & Co., Boston, 1971, pp. 40-56

13. Sorensen, Kennedy, pp. 676-8

Hypothesis 1: Bargaining Barter. The previous Eisenhower administration had basically forced Turkey to allow United States Jupiter missiles to be installed on its soil. By this time the missiles were obsolete and President Kennedy had previously ordered their removal. The characteristics of the operation cannot sustain the claim that the Soviets made the initial move intending to force the removal of the missiles from Turkey. First, the Soviet missile deployment was much larger than the single squadron of Jupiter (15 missiles) deployed in Turkey. Secondly, if the intention had been to eventually withdraw the missiles, it is probable that the Soviets would have avoided the expense of permanent IRBM sites. Because of the earlier Berlin airlift, Khrushchev had found that the American commitment to Berlin was un-shakable and would probably be unwilling to utilize Cuba as a bargaining chip for Berlin for fear that an American response would mean war.

Hypothesis 2: Diverting trap. If the United States could be goaded into attacking tiny Cuba, the allies would be divided, the U.N. horrified, Latin Americans would become more anti-American than ever, and America would be diverted while Khrushchev moved swiftly in on Berlin. This theory was discounted because of the presence of a large number of Russian military personnel which would have discouraged the United States from attacking the missile sites. Additionally, if the Soviets had wanted an attack upon Cuba, their intelligence as late as October 28th predicted that

they would only have had to wait a few more days than they did before agreeing to withdraw the missiles and an attack would have occurred. The United States was in fact prepared to attack by October 30th if the Soviet Union had not announced its intention to withdraw the missiles on the 28th.

Hypothesis 3: Cuban Defense. The earlier Bay of Pigs invasion had been a faint-hearted effort, but it had whetted the appetite of hawkish congressmen and Cuban refugee groups. A large amphibious exercise PHIBRIGLEX-62, was at that time in progress in which a force of 7,500 Marines supported by 4 aircraft carriers, 20 destroyers, and 15 troop carriers planned to storm the coral beaches of Vieques Island off the southeastern coast of Puerto Rico to overthrow a mythical dictator named Ortsac (Castro spelled backwards). The Soviets' later admissions of the presence of the missiles claimed that Cuban defense was in fact the reason they had been installed. It is significant, however, that no one in the United States government believed that the deployment of Soviet missiles was truly intended to deter a U.S. invasion of Cuba, although Castro's defeat was certain if the Marines did attack.14

Hypothesis 4: Cold War Politics. Undertaken in secrecy, the success of Khrushchev's plan to install the missiles required a fait accompli. Confronted with operational

14. Garthoff, Raymond L., Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. 1987, p. 25

missiles, the United States would be too timid to risk a nuclear war and too concerned with legalisms to react with determined resolution. According to this hypothesis the Soviets predicted that the United States, when confronted with operational missiles, would merely protest through the United Nations or other diplomatic channels and by doing so would make tacit admissions to the world that the Monroe Doctrine, the Rio Treaty, and the President's own words carried no backbone. Perhaps the President's refusal to provide the decisive air support that Brigade 2506 needed for the success of its mission encouraged Khrushchev to "probe the tiger." During one of the ExComm meetings, Ambassador Charles Bohlen quoted an old adage of Lenin which compared national expansion to a bayonet thrust: "If you strike steel, pull back; if you strike mush, keep going." If America failed this test of will, Khrushchev could move forward in a more important place, such as West Berlin or to put new pressure on American overseas bases, but with the strength of nuclear missiles pointed at America's back. This hypothesis represents the most widely accepted explanation of the Soviet move and was accepted by the President himself.

Hypothesis 5: Missile Power. Since the launch of Sputnik I in 1957, there had been such general panic in America concerning a missile and technology gap in American strategic defenses that it became a political issue which helped propel Kennedy to the Presidency. However, by the early sixties it was widely recognized, at least in

government circles, that the gap that did exist was strongly in favor of the United States. Khrushchev himself realized this, and, partially because of the adverse strategic balance, he had twice failed in his offensives against Berlin. By stationing nuclear missiles so close to America, a first strike could destroy America's B-52 strategic bomber force on the ground, which required a 15 minute alert. At a fraction of the cost of matching the United States' land-based arsenal and the rapidly developing sea-based Polaris submarine-launched ballistic missile system, the Soviets could drastically alter the strategic balance. This hypothesis explains the introduction of IRBM's and offers the most satisfactory explanation of the Soviet intentions, according to Allison. 15

At the President's direction, most of the following week was spent analyzing all possible courses of action and weighing the arguments for and against each. Allison has summarized the six general courses action considered as follows:16

Course of Action I: Do nothing. American vulnerability to Soviet missiles was nothing new, but all in ExComm agreed that some action was required to counter this significant challenge to American power and prestige. Otherwise, no American commitment would be credible.

15. Allison, Essence of Decision, p. 55, See also Garthoff, Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis, p. 26

16. Allison, Essence of Decision, pp. 56-62

Course of Action II: Diplomatic pressures. The United States could make diplomatic appeals through the Organization of American States, the United Nations, make secret approaches to Khrushchev, or even propose a summit meeting. The possibility of U.N. action was slim since the Russians could veto any proposed actions and their ambassador, Valerian Zorin, was then chairman of the Security Council. Any diplomatic initiative would result in demands for U.S. concessions. ExComm eventually concluded that this approach was untenable since the missiles would shortly be operational and any "deals" might confirm the suspicions of our western allies that the United States would yield our resolve on European security when a direct challenge was made to our own security.

Course of Action III: A Secret Approach to Castro. The United States could privately threaten Castro by warning him that his alternative was the downfall of his government and attempt to split him from the Soviet camp. The weakness of this alternative was that the missiles belonged to the Soviet Union, not to Castro, and he had no direct control over them. The removal would, therefore, require a Soviet decision anyway.

Course of Action IV: Invasion. A sizable amphibious task force was already in the vicinity and could simply be diverted to Cuba. The United States could then "kill two birds with one stone" by removing the missiles and Castro at the same time. However, this alternative practically

guaranteed an equivalent Soviet move against Berlin.

Course of Action V: Surgical Air Strike. Many members of ExComm and the President himself on Tuesday and Wednesday preferred this alternative. Former Secretary of State, Dean Acheson championed this alternative to very lucid and convincing arguments. General Curtis LeMay, the Air Force Chief of Staff, also argued strongly with the President that some type of military attack was essential.17 Listening to the air strike proposals, Robert Kennedy passed the famous note to his brother upon which was written "I now know how Tojo felt when he was planning Pearl Harbor." 18 As this course of action was analyzed, however, it became apparent that any air strike, to be successful, could hardly be "surgical." It would require a massive attack of at least 500 sorties which would kill Russians and whose success in destroying all of the missiles could not be guaranteed. Ultimately, the President discounted this alternative because there was no guarantee of success and because it was contrary to strong American traditions against surprise attacks without warning, particularly against such a tiny nation.

Course of Action VI: Naval Blockade. The naval blockade is an act of war and in violation of the U.N. Charter and international law, unless the United States could obtain a two-thirds vote supporting such action in the O.A.S.

17. Kennedy, Robert F., Thirteen Days, pp. 36-8

18. Ibid., p. 31

The blockade of Cuba could invite a similar reprisal against Berlin. During the blockade period, the Soviets would have additional time to complete construction of the missile sites. Castro might attack the Navy ships blockading the island or attack Guantanamo. It would offer the Soviets time to delay. Despite these disadvantages, it did have some advantages. It would be aggressive enough to communicate firmness, but not as precipitous as a first strike. It would avoid a direct military clash if Khrushchev kept Soviet ships away. Its primary advantage was that it exploited our significant naval strength. Any U.S. naval blockade in the Carribbean at our doorstep would be invincible. The blockade also avoided the dangers of using strategic forces to compel the Soviets to withdraw and permitted the United States to exploit the threat of subsequent non-nuclear steps in which it would enjoy significant superiority.19 The use of military force, coupled with the making of strong administration coercive statements, has frequently in the Cold War achieved favorable results. 20

Despite all the hawkish rhetoric that had recently been

19. Kaplan, Stephen S., Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1981, p. 675. But, without at least the implicit threat of further action such as an air strike or invasion, the blockade alone could not have forced the removal of missiles already present, Allison, Essence of Decision, p. 64.

20. Blechman, Barry M. and Kaplan, Stephen S., Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1978, pp. 115-8

bantered about Washington, surprisingly few members of ExComm supported an invasion. Some did argue that a blockade would seem indecisive and that an American airborne seizure of Havana and the government was the best alternative. But, with a blockade, invasion was a last step, not the first. At the conclusion of the meeting of ExComm held at 2:30 p.m. on October 20th, according to Sorensen, "...there was a brief, awkward silence. It was the most difficult and dangerous decision any president could make, and only he could make it. No one else bore his burdens or had his perspective." 21

The time had come for the President of the United States to make a decision. The decision he would make could change the course of humanity. It could mean the difference between peace and war, humiliation or prestige, victory or defeat. He knew that the entire human race would be affected by either war or surrender. Finally the President announced his decision--to impose a naval blockade around the island of Cuba and to intercept and sink if necessary any Soviet or other ship attempting to take war materiel to the island. The President had truly been the leader of those whom he had chosen to be his advisors. He had forced them to question, to reconsider, to fully evaluate the alternatives. The decision he made was tailored to make maximum use of American strengths--superior naval force--and minimized any effort to exploit political advantage out of the situation. He carefully deleted from the speech he intended to give to the

21. Sorensen, Kennedy, p. 694

American people any reference to any effort to remove Castro from power.

At 5:00 p.m. that afternoon the President met with some twenty congressional leaders. He had them recalled from campaign tours and vacationing spots all over the country, some by jet fighters and trainers. Sorensen glibly notes that "members of both parties campaigning for re-election gladly announced the cancellation of their speeches on the grounds that the President needed their advice." 22 Many disagreed with his intended action. He rejected all suggestions of reconvening Congress or requesting a formal declaration of war. Later he would state that "if they had gone through the 5 day period we had gone through--and looking at the alternatives, advantages and disadvantages--they would have come out the same way that we did." 23

That evening President Kennedy on national television addressed the nation that had chosen him as the Commander in Chief of their armed forces. The United States had played its hand to the nation and the world. What has become known as the "Cuban Missile Crisis" had officially begun.

22. Ibid., p. 702

23. Ibid., p. 702

CHAPTER III

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF IN COMMAND

Now that the crisis was public knowledge, the pace of events quickened. Some Americans reacted with panic, but most took pride that their country was taking a strong stand for its defense. Essential military preparations to be discussed in subsequent chapters had already taken place. More were put into action. Prime Minister Harold MacMillan of Great Britain telephoned his support. Many allies complained about not being consulted but, despite some equivocation by Canada, the N.A.T.O. Council and Charles DeGaulle of France pledged their backing. By Tuesday the Republican congressional leaders, including Senator Keating, called for complete support of the President. The flood of telegrams received at the White House expressed confidence and support in the President by a ratio of 10 to 1. 1

The United States requested a meeting of the U.N. Security Council and called, as a provisional measure under Article 40 of the Charter, for the immediate dismantling and withdrawal from Cuba of all missiles and other offensive weapons, 2 and Cuba requested the Security Council to consider the act of war committed by United States in

1. Sorensen, Kennedy, p. 707

2. State, Department of , American Foreign Policy 1962, U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 404

ordering the naval blockade. 3 As anticipated, debate in the United Nations was fierce. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, although he had been strongly in favor of a diplomatic response in ExComm, argued the United States position forcefully. At 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 23, the debate commenced with Stevenson's delivering a scathing attack of Soviet post-war policies followed by a summary of the draft resolution on offensive weapons in Cuba:

> I have often wondered what the world would be like today if the situation at the end of the war had been reversed--if the United States had been ravaged and shattered by war, and if the Soviet Union had emerged intact in exclusive possession of the atomic bomb and overwhelming military and economic might. Would it have followed the same path and devoted itself to realizing the world of the Charter?
>
> * * * *
>
> This draft resolution calls, as an interim measure under Article 40 of the Charter, for the immediate dismantling and withdrawal from Cuba of all missiles and other offensive weapons.4

Cuba's ambassador to the U.N., Sr. Mario Garcia-Inchaustegui rejected "as false and dishonest all the accusations leveled by the President of the United States and repeated here by his representative to the U.N...." 5 and

3. Ibid., p. 405

4. Jacobs, Norman, ed., "The Cuban Crisis, A Documentary Record," Foreign Policy Association Headline Series, Number 57, January-February 1963, pp. 33,49

5. Ibid., p. 50

declared that the "naval blockade" was an "act of war against the sovereignty and independence of Cuba" 6. Referring to the United States' most morally vulnerable position, that of a supporter of the Bay of Pigs invasion against Cuba, he suggested that "U.N. observers should be sent to the United States bases from which invaders and pirates emerge to punish and harrass a small state, whose only crime is that of struggling for the development of its own people." 7

The Soviet ambassador to the U.N., Valerian A. Zorin, echoed the "falsity of the accusations now made by the United States against the Soviet Union" and claimed that the armaments and military materiel being sent to Cuba were exclusively for "defensive" purposes and that the Soviet rockets and missiles were so powerful that there was "no need to seek a location for their launching anywhere outside the territory of the Soviet Union." 8

The Soviet Council of Ministers on the same date issued a statement delineating the measures being carried out to raise the combat readiness of the Soviet armed forces including the postponement of demobilization from the Soviet army of the older contingents of strategic rocket troops, anti-aircraft troops, and the submarine fleet, the halting of furloughs for all personnel, and the raising of combat

6. State, Dept. of, American Foreign Policy 1962, p. 418

7. Jacobs, "The Cuban Crisis," p. 51

8. Ibid, p. 52

readiness and vigilance of all troops.9

Also on October 23, 1962 the Organization of American States unanimously approved a resolution calling for the immediate dismantling and withdrawal from Cuba of all offensive missiles and weapons. It also invoked the right, pursuant to Articles 6 and 8 of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, to take measures, including the use of armed force, to prevent Cuba from receiving further military materiel which might threaten the peace and security of the continent.10 This important Latin American endorsement of the originally unilateral U.S. action in imposing the quarantine was necessary to add legal justification to the quarantine under international and maritime law as well as the U.N. Charter.

When the U.N. Security Council debate resumed on October 25th, Stevenson charged that "one of these missiles can be armed with its nuclear warhead in the middle of the night, pointed at New York, and landed above this room five minutes after it was fired."11 Flanked by photo interpreters and intelligence analysts, Stevenson charged the Soviet ambassador:

> Alright, sir, let me ask you one simple question: Do you, Ambassador Zorin, deny that the U.S.S.R. has placed and is placing medium and intermediate

9. State, Dept. of, American Foreign Policy 1962 p. 407

10. Ibid., pp. 408-10

11. Jacobs, "The Cuban Crisis," p. 56

> range missiles and sites in Cuba? Yes or No? Don't wait for the translation yes or no! (the Soviet representative refused to answer)....
>
> You can answer yes or no. You have denied that they exist and I want to know whether I have understood you correctly...
>
> I am prepared to wait for my answer until hell freezes over if that is your decision. I am also prepared to present the evidence in this room."12

Zorin equivocated in his answer, claiming that he was not in an American court room.

The previous day, on October 24th, the U.N.'s acting Secretary General, U Thant, intervened personally in the crisis by sending two identically worded messages to President Kennedy and to Premier Khrushchev. He offered to mediate the crisis and urged that the quarantine be lifted.13 At the same time he urged that the construction and development of major military facilities and installations in Cuba be suspended during the period of negotiations.14 It is interesting to note, with historical hindsight, that included within this appeal was a quote from a speech given by Castro before the General Assembly two weeks prior to the beginning of the Cuban Missile Crisis that "were the United States able to give us proof, by word and deed, that it would not carry out aggression against our country, then we declare

12. Jacobs, "The Cuban Crisis", p. 61

13. State, Dept. of, American Foreign Policy 1962, p. 436

14. Ibid., p. 422

solemnly before you here and now that our weapons would be unnecessary and our army redundant." 15 President Kennedy stood his ground and responded that "the existing threat was created by the secret introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba, and the answer lies in the removal of such weapons."16

U Thant next urged Soviet ships to stay away from the quarantine line for a limited time 17 and for the United States vessels to do everything possible to avoid direct confrontation with Soviet ships in the next few days. 18

At the White House the President obtained data about each Russian ship approaching the quarantine line and personally made the decision which vessels should be confronted and inspected by U.S. Navy officers and which should be permitted to pass by the quarantine.19 The first tense moments occurred during the first half hour following the beginning of the quarantine at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, October 24th. Within fifteen minutes, two Soviet ships, the Gargarin and the Komiles, would reach the blockade line. At the last minute a Soviet submarine maneuvered into position between the two Soviet ships and the ships on the Navy picket

15. Jacobs, "The Cuban Crisis", p. 64

16. State, Dept. of, American Foreign Policy 1962, p. 424

17. Ibid., p. 425

18. Ibid., p. 426

19. Sorensen, Kennedy, pp. 708-10

line. But at 10:25 a.m. word reached the White House that the Russian ships had stopped dead in the water, and by 10:32 a.m. additional information was received that fourteen Soviet ships in the vicinity of the blockade had either stopped or turned back toward their home ports. A sense of relief swept the White House that Khrushchev had decided not to challenge the quarantine.20

The next day the President permitted a Soviet tanker, the Bucharest, to pass through the quarantine line after identifying itself, because of the little likelihood of its carrying offensive weapons and because he desired to give Khrushchev more time to work out his position before forcing the quarantine. Meanwhile intelligence photos produced by U-2 flights and by low flying reconnaissance aircraft confirmed that construction on the missile sites was proceeding at a feverish pace and that the missiles would shortly be operational. The reconnaissance effort was monumental during the crisis and the film alone produced by these photographic missions was to exceed twenty-five miles in length. 21

The first hope for a break in the crisis came when John Scali, an ABC news correspondent at the State Department, received a telephone call from Alexander Fomin, the Soviets'

20. Brune, , The Missile Crisis of October 1962, p. 62

21. Kennedy, Robert F., Thirteen Days, p. 68

K.G.B. agent in Washington, requesting that they have lunch. At the meeting Fomin told Scali that he feared war would break out and asked Scali if he thought Americans would promise not to invade Cuba if Khrushchev promised to remove the Soviet missiles from Cuba. Fomin wanted Scali to communicate this to the State Department and discover the United States' reaction to the proposal. He gave Scali his embassy phone number and urged that he make haste in his reply. Scali rushed to the State Department and the news was quickly relayed to Secretary Rusk. Rusk contacted the White House and the President approved a positive response for Fomin. Rusk emphasized that time was very urgent and that the Russians make their offer in no less than two days.

That evening at 6:00 p.m. the State Department received a ten page letter from Khrushchev via the U.S. embassy in Moscow. In emotional wording, uncharacteristic of most Soviet diplomatic messages, Khrushchev professed his longing for peace and pleaded for both leaders not to let the situation get out of hand. The enforcement of the quarantine would only force the Soviets to take countermeasures. Then the Soviet leader suggested a settlement exactly as Alexander Fomin had proposed to Scali. When Rusk received the message he was elated and told Scali "remember when you report this--that eyeball to eyeball, they blinked first."22

22. Brune, The Missile Crisis of October 1962, p.66

The most dangerous period of the entire crisis, however, occurred the next day. Just as there was some hope for a peaceful resolution, a second letter was received, reportedly from Khrushchev, taking a much harder line than the first letter had taken and proposing that the United States Jupiter missiles be removed from Turkey in exchange for the removal of missiles from Cuba. 23 The President refused to allow commitments to a N.A.T.O. ally to be diluted or bargained away by the negotiations in Cuba.

Additionally, at 10:15 that morning the news arrived that an American U-2 plane piloted by Major Rudolph Anderson, Jr., U.S.A.F., had been shot down. To the ExComm members, the attack against the U-2, which could only hinder further U.S. reconnaissance efforts, coupled with the two conflicting letters from Khrushchev, appeared to be attempts to deceive American leaders into delaying any new U.S. action until all of the Cuban missiles became operational. With this news, there was at first almost unanimous agreement that the United States should attack the following morning with bombers and fighters and destroy the S.A.M. sites.24 But again, despite the tremendous pressure to attack, the President again stood his ground, this time against his own advisors. It wasn't the first step that concerned him, but both sides escalating

23. Kennedy, Robert F., Thirteen Days, pp.164-9

24. Ibid., p.98

to further steps that was the danger.

It is not known to this day why Major Anderson's U-2 was shot down, but, under the circumstances, it was certainly either a deliberate attack or an unauthorized blunder. Blunders, however, were not confined to the Soviet side. The same day, through a navigational error, a U-2 flying over Alaska flew deep into Soviet territory which caused Soviet fighters to scramble to divert it.25 The error was unintentional, but the President worried that a wary Khrushchev might speculate that the flight was to survey targets for a preemptive nuclear strike.

ExComm considered that the point of escalation was at hand. The alternatives were tightening the blockade, increasing low level reconnaissance flights, using the flights to harass the Cubans, and dropping leaflets informing Cubans of the missile sites and air strikes. There was also the ever-present spectre of the ultimate invasion of Cuba.26 Twenty-four Air Force Reserve troop carrier squadrons were called up to better prepare for a military response and special messages were sent to N.A.T.O. outlining the critical stage which had been reached. The President, though, still refused to take the next step of ordering further military action.

25. Sorensen, Kennedy, p. 713

26. Ibid., pp.713-6

Throughout the crisis President Kennedy was impressed with the effort and dedicated manner in which the military responded to the Cuban contingency. But, with the notable exception of General Taylor, the President was disturbed with the advice he received from his military chiefs.27 To the President it seemed that the military leaders always assumed that a war was in our national interest and seemed unable to look beyond the limited military field to the broader consequences of initiating a preemptive strike against Cuba. No doubt the President had bittersweet hindsight himself of the Bay of Pigs fiasco. In that instance he had relied almost implicitly upon his military advisors and the result was disastrous. Then, to make matters worse, at the precise moment when the use of United States military force could have turned the tide, the President refused to use it, thereby making himself appear to be weak not only in his own eyes but in the eyes of his adversaries.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, therefore, the President found himself on the horns of a dilemma with his military advisors. On one hand he distrusted their advice, but, on the other hand, could he as a neophyte military leader do a better job leading the military (even though he was the Commander in Chief) than those professional military leaders upon whom he was supposed to rely? But, because a

27. Kennedy, Robert F., Thirteen Days, pp. 118-20

military response was a distinct possibility, he was forced to consult them. Could he combat the "weak" image by adopting the more aggressive stance advocated by his military advisors? Ironically, he was to prove that, by standing up to the very strong pressure of his military advisors, he would be demonstrating his strength.

The President had earlier in the week been able to demonstrate both his strength as a leader and his technical competence as the Commander in Chief. On many occasions the President's military advisors had pointed out to him the Cuban aircraft lined up wing to wing on Cuban airfields as evidence of how easy it would be to strike against them. On a flight to Palm Beach during the United States military buildup in the southeastern United States, the President had observed our own aircraft lined up wing to wing on military airfields and, to further verify it, he ordered a secret U-2 flight to photograph our own military airfields. The military had assured him that his fears were unfounded and it was with some chagrin that the military leaders viewed the U-2 photographs which resulted. The aircraft were quickly dispersed.28

President Kennedy had read the Guns of August and had pondered over the gross misapprehensions and misjudgments that led to the First World War which nobody wanted and which in the end utterly devastated those who participated. He

28. Sorensen, Kennedy, p. 708

mused to his brother that "war is rarely intentional." 29 and yet, despite his intention to the contrary, he found himself teetering along with his adversary on the very brink of a war that could dwarf the devastation of World War I. Neither the United States nor the Russians wanted a war. Yet what could unlock the chain of events that seemed inevitably to lead to that end?

The answer may have come from a quite unlikely source. On the night of Tuesday, October 23th, the President dined quietly at the White House with some English friends.30 The President beckoned the British ambassador, David Ormsby Gore, out into the long central hall while the dinner party continued inside. Robert Kennedy joined them after having just returned from a meeting with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin in an effort to find out whether the Soviet ships had instructions to turn back if challenged on the high seas. The concern heightened when the President's brother reported that the Soviet ambassador seemed unaware of any instructions. The British for centuries had been masters at the art of super-power diplomacy. With a deep global insight the British ambassador suggested that Khrushchev had some hard decisions to make and that every additional hour might make it easier for him to climb down gracefully. Following

29. Kennedy, Robert F., Thirteen Days, p. 105

30. Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr., A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House, Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston 1965, pp.817-8

his suggestion at the time, President Kennedy ordered the quarantine line withdrawn closer to Cuba even though it would be closer to the striking radius of Cuban aircraft. Later in June of 1963 in a speech at the American University the President commented that, while defending their own vital interests, the nuclear powers must avoid confrontations which "bring an adversary to the choice of either a humiliating defeat or a nuclear war."31

It was this realization by the President of the United States that probably averted the war that so nearly occurred. He realized that his Soviet counterpart had taken a risk in placing the missiles, but the United States action in calling his bluff had placed him in a potentially highly embarrassing and humiliating situation. When the United States military urged a military response, with an insight that President Kennedy no doubt obtained himself as a Chief of State, the President kept insisting that Khrushchev be allowed enough time and latitude to find a graceful "out".

The opportunity for Khrushchev to withdraw gracefully and to save face occurred when a positive response was delivered to the Scali/Fomin exchange. The President chose to ignore Moscow's second letter, suspecting it had been authored by the hawkish elements in the Kremlin. The tactic worked. At 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, October 28th, Moscow Radio broadcast the news that Khrushchev accepted Kennedy's deal to

31.Kennedy, Robert F., Thirteen Days, p. 126

remove Russian missiles in exchange for a promise that the United States would not invade Cuba. Offical word reached the Secretary of State at 11:00 a.m. By noon the President responded, welcoming Chairman Khrushchev's "statesmanlike decision to stop building bases in Cuba."32 Although the "deal" allowed Khrushchev to save face, it also blunted Kennedy's pre-crisis rhetoric against allowing communism to continue in Cuba. Two years later Richard Nixon in the Reader's Digest was to claim that Kennedy had "pulled defeat out of the jaws of victory."33

The United States initially wanted some type of supervision of the dismantling of the missile sites by the U.N. or the Red Cross. But Castro was angry with Khrushchev's decision to remove the missiles and, even after a personal visit from the Secretary General of the U.N., U Thant, Castro still refused to allow on-site inspection. 34 During his visit, the quarantine was suspended, but still there was no cooperation.35

After the Soviets agreed to withdraw the missiles, even over Castro's objections, and work had begun to dismantle the sites, another problem emerged. The United States contended

32. State, Dept. of, American Foreign Policy, 1962, pp. 444-5

33. Nixon, Richard, "Cuba, Castro and John F. Kennedy," Reader's Digest, Nov., 1964, pp. 283-300

34. State, Dept.of, American Foreign Policy 1962, p. 450

35. Ibid., p. 451

that the agreement to remove offensive weapons included the IL-28 bombers that the Soviets had been delivering to Cuba.36 Castro claimed that the bombers were a gift, but on November 19th he finally gave in and agreed that they could be withdrawn. The next day when Khrushchev agreed to remove the bombers from Cuba within 30 days, the President announced that the United States was ending the naval quarantine. The Soviets did in fact remove forty-two IL-28 bombers from Cuba between December 1st and 6th, 1962 and the Cuba Missile Crisis was officially history.

Although most in America exalted over what they considered to be victory in the strategic showdown with the Soviets,37 President Kennedy strictly enjoined ExComm from publicly claiming a victory in consonance with his determination to allow Khrushchev a graceful way out. For those in the Kennedy administration who had participated in the decision-making process, the Cuban Missile Crisis represented the President's finest hour.38 According to them, the President measured every level of response calmly, objectively, and precisely and was always in command. He

36. Garthoff, Raymond L., Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1987, pp. 67-83. See also "Summary Record of N.S.C. Executive Committee Meeting No. 10, October 28, 1962, 11:10 a.m.," p.2 (Top Secret; now declassified)

37. "Showdown - Backdown," Newsweek, Nov. 5, 1962, pp.27-35

38. Medland, William J., The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: Needless or Necessary, Praeger, New York, 1988, p. 56

gave his adversary time to respond in a manner which neither adversely affected Soviet national security nor humiliated him. By taking Khrushchev to the nuclear brink, the administration could later claim that the Soviets' post-crisis temperament in the Cold War began to be one of peaceful co-existence and detente rather than the previous history of confrontation.

The administration, with some credibility, could claim victory in its showdown with the Soviets. Elie Abel, the former foreign correspondent for the New York Times and for N.B.C. described the crisis as thirteen tension--filled days when "the young President played nuclear poker with Nikita Khrushchev and won."39 President Kennedy, as well as his adversary, have been harshly critized for brinkmanship diplomacy for their own selfish ends which threatened the world needlessly with nuclear war.40 Because the United States tasted the fruit of victory, it acquired a renewed confidence in its military powers, which according to Professor William J. Medland, led it to escalate its actions in Vietnam.41

39. Abel, Elie, The Missile Crisis, J.B. Lippincott Company, New York, 1966. (Book jacket)

40. Dinerstein, Herbert S., The Making of a Missile Crisis, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1976, pp. 229-33

41. Medland, The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, pp. 147-8

Perhaps, as Adlai Stevenson argued so vigorously at the time, the United States should have attempted to privately negotiate the removal of the missiles. At least a nuclear confrontation with its attendant uncertainty would have been averted. However, after Khrushchev personally observed President Kennedy at the Vienna summit in June of 1961 and after Kennedy refused to provide military backing for Brigade 2506, Khrushchev probably believed Kennedy was a weak adversary. 42 Negotiations would have required concessions to be effective, and those concessions could only have come from N.A.T.O. or Berlin. They would also have allowed the Soviets time to complete construction of their missile sites.

Perhaps it was just plain luck--or maybe even Divine mercy--but a war, nuclear or conventional, was averted. Although the United States had achieved at least its stated objective of the removal of the missiles, shortly after the crisis some were calling it a "net gain for the Kremlin." 43 In the short run, the United States appeared to have gained the upper hand, but what about the longer term today--and in the future?

42. Nixon, "Cuba, Castro, and John F. Kennedy," Readers Digest, p. 295. See also Shevchenko, Arkady N., Breaking with Moscow, Ballantine Brooks, New York, 1985, p. 154

43. Nixon "Cuba, Castro, and John F. Kennedy," p. 297

CHAPTER IV

"NAVAL PREPARATIONS PRIOR TO THE CRISIS"

In the decade preceding the Spanish-American War, a somewhat reserved United States naval officer and amateur historian, Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, published what was to become a classic work upon the history of sea power, The Influence of Sea Power on History, 1660 to 1783. His primary thesis, that the objective of a nation's navy was to search out the enemy's forces and to destroy or drive them from the seas, had several corollaries.1 The wealth and development of nations bordering upon the seas depended upon their ability to develop and project their national interest and influence through sea power. Industrial production, the exchange of products, and colonies were the keys to much of history as well as the foreign policy of nations bordering upon the sea. 2

Mahan enumerated six principal conditions which affected the development of sea power.3 Although the United States quite comfortably fit into all of his criteria, he himself asked "[w]hat need has the United States of sea power?"4 He answered his own question with the ironic conclusion that,

1. Livesey, William E., Mahan on Sea Power, University of Okla. Press, Norman, Okla. 1981, p. 315

2. Mahan, A. T., Capt., The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1932, p. 28

3. Ibid., pp. 28-89

4. Ibid., p. 84

because the United States had no colonies and was not likely to have any, it did not need a significant sea capability.

. Fifteen years later, the eminent geo-politician Halford Mackinder read a paper to the Royal Geographical Society entitled "The Geographical Pivot of History"5 in which he suggested that the Columbian epoch, the four centuries of overseas exploration and conquest by the European powers, was coming to an end and an altogether different epoch was about to begin. He predicted an explosion of social forces in an enclosed environment in which efficiency and internal development would replace expansionism as the main aim of modern states. The size of nations and numbers of their population would be more accurately reflected in the fear of international developments. The vast region of central Russia with all of its un-marshalled population and resources would become a pivot area of the world. Successful world powers would be those with the greatest industrial bases, and the power of invention of science would be able to defeat all others. According to Mackinder, the result would be the waning of sea power in relation to land power.

Throughout the Twentieth Century ,6 strategists have debated the propriety of maritime-based versus land-based force projection. All agree, however, that Mahan and Mackinder, have literally influenced the course of nations

5. Kennedy, Paul M., The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1976, pp. 183-4

6. Livezey, Mahan on Sea Power, pp. 297-386

and history in this century. Generally, however, Mackinder is credited with being the more prescient.

Until some point after World War II, the Soviet Union had never sought to be or become a maritime power. Indeed, those naval adventures that it had previously undertaken had met with bitter defeat. Although a nation much more vast in resources, size, and population than Japan, Russia was decisively defeated by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) at the Battle of Tsushima in the greatest naval battle between Trafalgar (1805) and Jutland (1916).7

But at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the naval and maritime capability of the U.S.S.R. was mediocre.8 Through its military and political gerrymandering at the conclusion of World War II, the Soviet Union had established her military perimeter across the narrower part of Europe but her maritime flanks were uncomfortably exposed along the Baltic coast and the Black Sea. Because, however, of America's atomic capability, in 1954, the Soviet leadership that followed Stalin decided to downgrade the treatment of sea-borne invasion and give first priority to defending against the dangers of a surprise nuclear attack.9 These post-Stalin leaders concluded that a greater reliance on long

7. Young, Peter, Brig. ed. Great Battles of the World, Book Value International, Northbrook, Ill., 1978, p. 10

8. Quester, George H., ed. Sea Power in the 1970's, Dunellen Publishing Co., New York, 1975, pp. 4-5

9. MccGwire, Michael, ed., Soviet Naval Policy: Objectives and Constraints, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1975, pp. 505-11

range cruise missiles carried by surface ships, diesel submarines, and aircraft would allow resources to be released from warship construction to the domestic economy. To implement these decisions, Khrushchev brought Admiral Gorshov to Moscow to replace the former commander in chief of the navy who strongly opposed these decisions. The building of cruisers was halted in mid-course, mass production of medium submarines was sharply brought to a halt, and, although destroyer escort and subchaser programs were allowed to continue, their successor classes were postponed for years. The Soviet naval air force was stripped of its fighter elements which were transferred to the newly formed national air defense. This defensively-oriented navy was supported by shore-based air cover.

A new defense policy announced by Khrushchev in January, 1960 down-graded the role of conventional ground forces in deference to a heavier emphasis on nuclear delivery systems. By implication, the Soviet navy was not intended to challenge the West's world-wide maritime capability. The end result was that the Soviet navy was at a low ebb as a result of the cut-backs in naval construction resulting from the 1954 re-evaluation of naval programs as it entered the Cuban Missile Crisis.10 In contrast, the United States Navy was second to none the world over, and the contest was in its backyard.

10. Ibid, p. 509

President Kennedy chose to employ a naval "quarantine" in his initial action against the Soviet Union in the Cuban Missile Crisis. The only difference between a blockade and a quarantine was that a blockade was an act of war and a quarantine, at least in name, was not. Historically, blockades had been very effective weapons which would sooner or later bring an enemy to its knees 11 and to which even the United States was vulnerable, at least in Mahan's eyes at that time.12 However, it is probable that, without the implicit threat of air strike or invasion, the blockade alone, while it could have prevented Soviet ships from bringing additional missiles to Cuba, could not have forced the removal of the missiles already present.13 The real beauty of the blockade strategy from a military point of view, however, was that it capitalized upon America's naval strengths and exploited the Soviet Union's naval weaknesses. The classic confrontation between the Americans and the Russians of which DeTocqueville had warned over almost a century and a half earlier was about to begin--with America choosing the weapons.14

11. Kennedy, Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery, p. 182

12. Mahan, Influence of Sea Power Upon History, pp. 84-5

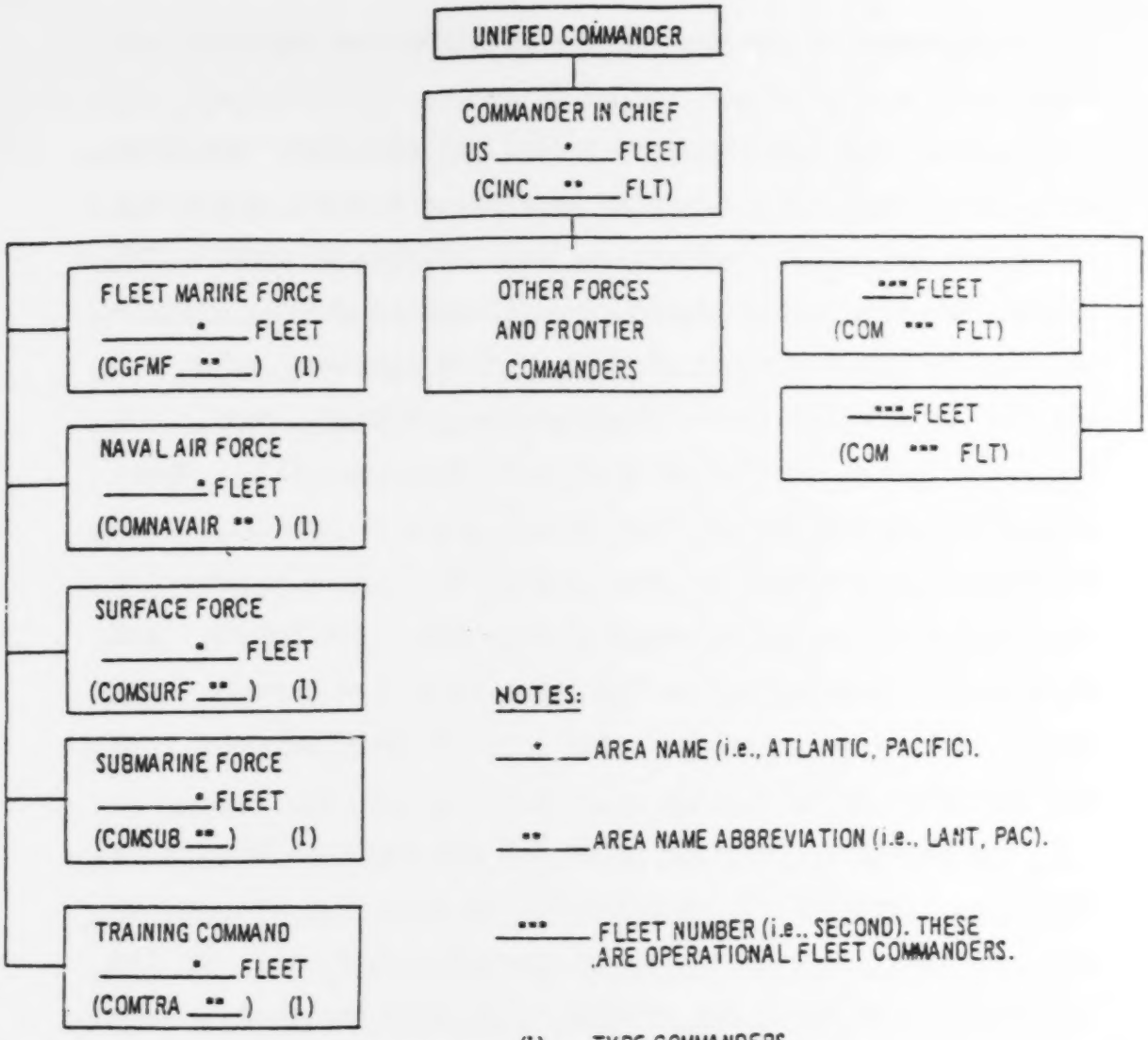
13. Allison, Essence of Decision, p. 64

14. De Tocqueville, Alexis, Democracy in America , Washington Square Press, New York, 1964, pp. 124-5

Charged with the primary responsibility of the continential defense of a great maritime nation with lengthy coastlines as well as with the defense of sealanes in remote parts of the world, the United States Navy has grown into a massive military institution. It is generally divided into two commands, the Atlantic Command and the Pacific Command, with the dividing point being the Suez Canal. Based upon the hard-fought experience of World War II, navy combat functions are further divided into three basic elements. The premier capital ship in the modern navy is the aircraft carrier deployed in a carrier battle group, with a primary mission of sea superiority. Second is the submarine force composed of primarily nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines and nuclear-powered attack submarines. This force has a primary mission of sea denial and, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, still had many diesel powered submarines. The third major element is the amphibious warfare force intended to project military presence from the fleet to the shore. The organization of a fleet is depicted in Figure 3.

There are four fleets assigned to the Atlantic and Pacific commands. Cuba lies within the Atlantic area of responsibility and the 2nd Fleet headquartered at Norfolk, Virginia. The 6th Fleet covers the Mediterranean and both of these have close links with N.A.T.O. fleets. The eastern Pacific is the province of the 3rd Fleet which is quartered at Pearl Harbor. The 7th Fleet, also headquartered at Pearl Harbor, is generally responsible for the western Pacific with

FLEET ORGANIZATION



Reprinted from Fleet Marine Force Organization 1980, p.3

FIGURE 3

units scattered as far west as the Phillippines, Okinawa, and Guam.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis carriers were employed extensively both for quarantine operations and for operations in support of the planned attacks and invasion of Cuba. The largest was the carrier Enterprise, launched shortly before the crisis in September of 1960. Also involved were the smaller attack carriers, Independence, Midway, Wasp, and Lexington (which saw combat service in World War II). These carriers, depending on their size, could accommodate from seventy to ninety-five aircraft. Each carrier is accompanied into battle by screening ships of cruisers, destroyers, and frigates. Each carrier battle group will also usually have some submarines assigned to it and be serviced by replenishment service ships.

The amphibious warfare ships are grouped into Amphibious Squadrons (PHIBRON's) each capable of remaining on station with a reinforced U.S. Marine Battalion and all of its equipment. At least one PHIBRON is usually attached to each fleet. The older World War II ships sometimes required the amphibious assault ships to beach themselves in the assault but the newer amphibious ships have landing craft embarked aft and floodable wells. These ships vary in design and include amphibious transport dock (LPD's) and dock landing ships (LSD's), both of which are self-propelled floating docks with varying capacities for troop accomodations. More modern are the LPH amphibious assault ships,

small carriers for helicopters which can also accomodate over 1,700 combat troops with their gear, vehicles, and artillery and twenty large helicopters for use in vertical assaults. Even larger are the LHA assault ships. LST's are amphibious assault ships capable of landing tanks over the beach. Most of the command ships for amphibious operations (LCC's) which were in service during the Cuban Missile Crisis were also in service during World War II.

One of the greatest strengths of the United States Navy has always been the support that its fleets receive from service ships that act as forward bases for replenishment. These consist of replenishment oilers (AO's), ammunition ships (AE's), fast combat support ships (AOE's), destroyer tenders (AD's), and submarine tenders (AS's).

Naval aviation consists of a variety of aircraft for a multitude of missions. Fighters and attack squadrons are routinely rotated from shore bases to deployment aboard carriers. The navy also has extensive anti-submarine patrol craft and long range reconnaissance air craft.

The United States was not surprised by a Cuban contingency. Since Cuba lies within the Atlantic Command (CINCLANT) area of responsibility, the task for preparing plans for military operations in Cuba fell to Admiral Robert L. Dennison, the area unified commander.15 The resulting operation plans were numbered 312, 314, and 316. OPLAN 312 provided for the rapid use of U.S. air power against Cuba from a no-warning condition and for a variety of

requirements ranging from air strikes against single targets to widespread air attacks throughout Cuba.16 Change Two was devoted to the defense of the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base which was assigned to the Commander, Antilles Defense Command (COMANTDEFCOM). Change Four divided OPLAN 312 into three different categories. Category I code named "Fire Hose" provided for the selective destruction of surface to air missile sites as directed by CINCLANT. Category II code named "Shoe Black" provided for a wider selection of targets under limited operations and for grouping of targets by types (airfields, SAM sites, missile complexes, and combat air patrols). Category III code named "Scabbards 312" provided for large scale air attacks against Cuba. Essential aviation support equipment and ordnance was to be pre-positioned in southern Florida and elsewhere in the Caribbean.

Even though no nuclear missiles were known to be in Cuba at the time, extensive training exercises were initiated on September 18, 1962 in support of OPLAN 312. Two carriers, the Independence and Enterprise, were deployed as Naval Task

15. Atlantic Command, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis, U.S. Naval Base, Norfolk, Virginia 1963. The bulk of the remainder of this chapter was extracted from this document. Portions remain classified.

16. Headquarters, USAF, The Air Force Response to the Cuban Missile Crisis, USAF Historical Division Liaison Officer, Bolling AFB, Washington D.C., 1962, pp.7-10

Force 135 with Air Groups 6 and 7 and a Marine A-4D squadron embarked aboard. The Commander of Carrier Division 6 was designated its commander (CTF 135) and was in position for possible execution of OPLAN 312-62 on October 20, 1962. One Marine air group (MAG) at Key West and two carrier air groups in the Jacksonville area were directed to report to CINCAFLANT for planning and for operations if ordered.

OPLAN 314-61 provided for joint military operations in Cuba by combined navy, air force, and army forces, as well as a simultaneous amphibious and air-borne assault in the Havana area by a joint task force within 18 days after the receipt of the order to execute. This plan envisioned the overthrow of the Castro government. On October 26th, upon the recommendation of CINCLANT, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed that planning and preparation for execution of OPLAN 314 be abandoned in favor of OPLAN 316.

OPLAN 316-62 employed the same forces as those in OPLAN 314. By October 17th at the request of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) a seven day delay between the beginning of air strikes and the commencement of a simultaneous assault by airborne and amphibious forces was incorporated. This allowed the full force of the Second Marine Division (minus) and the ten battle groups of the U.S. Army's XVIII Airborne Force to arrive simultaneously. CINCAFLANT would be responsible for air cperations in the Western Zone of Cuba except for the amphibious objective area and the commander of the naval task force would be responsible for the Eastern

Zone. MAG-14 would be chopped to the Commander of the Naval Task Force upon completion of its 312 operations.

During the initial phase of Cuban contingency operations planing, October 1-22, command and staff actions were commenced relating to the Cuban situation on a strict "need to know" basis. This involved the actual study of possible causes of action to determine the relative feasibility of each in accomplishing whatever precise missions might be assigned.

CINCLANT notified the Commander of the Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT) and the Commander of the Atlantic Fleet Air Forces (CINCAFLANT) on October 1st that all measures necessary to insure maximum readiness to execute CINCLANT OPLAN 312 by October 20th must been taken. In response U.S. Navy forces were earmarked for 6, 12, and 14 hour reaction times. Why such significant actions were taken prior to the outbreak of this crisis is unknown. Further research on this intriguing question was beyond the scope of this research paper.

By October 6th, CINCLANT directed increased readiness to execute the 312, 314, and 316 OPLANS. In response it was recommended that a carrier with an embarked air group should be maintained in or south of the Jacksonville/Mayport areas on a continuing basis, along with supporting ships. The permanent relocation of certain Marine units for the 312 plan was recommended in order to decrease the reaction time for the Marine elements involved. The relocation involved pre-

positioning a Marine air group at Key West and the assignment of a Marine division/wing team to the Atlantic command along with appropriate ampnibious shipping.

On October 8th the JCS referred to CINCLANT a memorandum from the Secretary of Defense outlining contingencies "under which military action against Cuba may be necessary and toward which our military planning should be oriented." These included Soviet bloc action against Berlin, positioning offensive weapons in Cuba, attacks against the Guantanamo Naval Base or U.S. planes, a popular uprising in Cuba which would recover Cuban independence from Castro, Cuban armed assistance to other parts of the western hemisphere, or other events triggering a decision by the President for action. In all contingency planning the Secretary of Defense stated that the political objective of removing the threat to United States security of Soviet weapon systems in Cuba or the removal of the Castro regime should be included. The Secretary of Defense also asked the Office of International Security to work with the State Department on political actions which should precede or accompany the military options.

On October 13th CINCLANT deleted CJTF-122 from the task organization of the 312 OPLAN and the Commander of the Tactical Air Command (COMTAC) assumed the role of CINCAFLANT in the plans. The Second Marine Air Wing directed Marine Air Groups 14 and 31 to pre-position certain aviation equipment at Key West on a priority basis. The USS Grant County was

made available for the sea lift of the material.

CINCLANT advised JCS on October 17th that one civil affairs area headquarters, four civil affairs groups, and eight civil affairs companies would be required. Two days later preparation for the implementation of psychological warfare operations was initiated. The appropriate annexes to the 314/316 OPLANS were initiated in support of the 312 plan. The capture of a Russian SAM site intact had always been a concern of armed forces intelligence, so by October 20th, CINCLANT had devised a scheme to capture one in conjunction with the execution of the 312/316 OPLANS. One option consisted of not launching air strikes against a selected SAM site. Under another option, two SAM sites would be selected and precise air strikes would be launched to destroy only the fire control system on one site and only the launcher and missiles on the other. CINCAFLANT and CINCARLANT agreed that the first option might be feasible with seaborne forces but would be extremely hazardous if attempted by airborne forces. Both also agreed that the second option was feasible, but highly impractical. They concluded that all SAM sites should be destroyed as forcefully and rapidly as possible in the initial assault.

The responsibilities of CJTF-122 were assumed by CINCLANT on October 20th. This placed a heavy additional burden on CINCLANT headquarters, and additional army and air force personnel were augmented, reaching a peak of 113 officers and 69 enlisted personnel. The staff was impressed

with the urgency that the contingency war room might have to be operated under conditions of general war.

During the build-up of forces which followed, it became apparent that there was a shortage of amphibious shipping needed for U.S. Army (ARLANT) forces and of LST's essential for a rapid build-up and delivery of forces and armored equipment into the objective area in the execution of the 316 OPLAN. To make up the gap, commercial LST's were chartered and 11 LST's from the Atlantic reserve fleet were activated. By October 26th the charter of twenty commercial cargo ships and their pre-positioning at ports for out-loading to reduce reaction times was also authorized.

In the air defense of the Key West area the rules of engagement were confusing and unclear, as CINCLANT and the Commander of the Continental Air Defense (CINCONAD) each had separate rules for their forces. CINCLANT issued a directive with JCS approval clarifying protective measures to be taken in defining hostile acts committed by enemy forces. An army "Hawk" unit was also assigned to the Key West area. Emergency funding was also approved for the construction of a new ground control intercept radar facility at NAS Key West, as the existing facilities were judged to be inadequate in terms of overall space and radar scopes.

In coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and CINCONAD, a military emergency zone (MEZ) was established in southern Florida. Emergency measures providing for the security control of air traffic (SCAT)

program would be implemented within the MEZ and all civilian and non-tactical military aircraft scheduled to terminate, depart, or overly the MEZ would be diverted, cancelled, or terminated.

In conjunction with the State Department a detailed military government directive was developed for delivery of civil relief supplies to Cuba in the event of military operations. New Orleans was to be used as the load-out port for supplies to support civil affairs operations.

A grim aspect of the planning was estimating the number of casualties which could be expected. The total estimates of KIA's, WIA's, MIA's (personnel killed, wounded, or missing), and non-battle sick and injured from D-Day to D + 10 exceeded 18,000 troops of which over 8,000 were estimated to be Marines and over 9,000 were U.S. Army soldiers. The estimates could be high or low since the degree of resistance could not be anticipated and the enemy could even employ tactical nuclear weapons. The Marines were expected to bear the brunt of D-Day's casualties with almost 2,500 estimated casualties.

The Commanding General of the U.S. Army Continental Army Command (USCONARC) received from CINCLANT as early as October 1st information concerning the eminence of a possible implementation of OPLAN 316-61. In the following days the JCS directed that units contained in the task force organization for OPLAN 316 be brought to the highest state of operational readiness as soon as possible. The major army

combat elements scheduled to participate in OPLAN 316 were:

Air Echelon

82nd Airborne Division
101st Airborne Division
Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division
(Two Battle Group Task Forces)
Battle Group Task Force
1st Infantry Division
Co. D (Light Tank), 66th Armor
1st Battalion, 92nd Field Artillery
2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery

Surface Echelon

Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division
(Two Battle Groups, reinforced with the
2nd Battalion (Medium Tank), 69th Armor)
Task Force CHARLIE, 1st Armored Division
2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery
1st Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery
54th Artillery Group

Floating Reserve

Headquarters, 1st Armored Division
Brigade of the 1st Armored Division
2nd Infantry Division
(Two Battle Group Task Forces)
On-Call Echelon

Brigade, 1st Armored Division
8th Battalion (Medium Tank), 34th Armor
3rd Battalion, 16th Field Artillery
Headquarters, 2nd Infantry Division and
supporting forces, if required
52nd Artillery Group

Originally, planners had envisioned a logical procedure for the progressive implementation of OPLANs 312 to 314 and 314 to 316. As planning proceeded, however, CINCARLANT realized that the major portion of the U.S. D-Day assault capability under that plan would be extremely vulnerable to enemy nuclear strikes, and that, therefore, the logical alternative would be to execute OPLAN 316 on a seven day

phase, pre-positioning forces and supplies as necessary to insure that the initial combat forces could meet reduced reaction times. The JCS agreed and on October 26th directed that further planning for OPLAN 314 should be suspended and all effort should thereafter be concentrated on refinement in planning for OPLAN 316.

By November 1, 1962 the Army Task Force had completed its relocation to Fort Stewart, Georgia and was placed on a three hour alert status for movement to the points of embarkation.

Had the invasion of Cuba been ordered, on D-Day the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions would have conducted parachute assaults, and Marines in sufficient force would have secured a beach-head at Tarara. The Second Infantry Division would then have landed over the beach at Tarara immediately behind the Marines and the First Armored Division would then have landed through the port at Mariel. If Havana had been secured, the First Armored Division would have landed there.

The preparation by United States naval forces to implement OPLAN 316 was divided into 3 phases. Phase I (alert phase) involved the activation of a naval task force headquarters including the necessary staff augmentation with all to be on a four hour movement notice. The Caribbean amphibious squadron (PHILBRON) with embarked Marines would be directed to deploy to an area within four miles steaming of Guantanamo Bay and other amphibious units would be placed on a 24 hour sailing notice. Necessary action to prepare

other designated forces for Cuban operations short of actual deployment including providing a flag ship for CJTF-122 were also tasked in the alert phase.

In the pre-position and deployment phase, Phase II, CINCLANT would provide for the most advanced state of operational readiness short of actual hostilities. This would include major deployments and repositioning of forces in which reserves, MATS aircraft, and MSTS shipping would be made available. The Caribbean PHIBRON would be chopped to COMANTDEFCON and, when the Marines disembarked, would sail to a CONUS port for reload. CINCLANT would also direct the commander of the naval task force to deploy to the vicinity of the objective area. The CG of FMFLANT would be directed to provide air-lifted reinforcement to Guantanamo with the assistance of the Atlantic Naval Air Forces Command (COMNAVAIRLANT).

Phase III, the deployment and pre-assault phase, would be ordered into execution by CINCLANT only after the outbreak of hostilities or a United States decision to conduct military operations in Cuba. In such an event the naval task force would be chopped to CJTF-122 and the deployment of naval task forces would continue and be chopped to the commander of the naval task force upon departure from CONUS ports.

The response of the U.S. armed forces to the Cuban Missile Crisis consisted of much more than preparation of operation plans. When the President decided to impose a

naval quarantine, the task forces to implement it had to be formed and deployed. The naval base at Guantanamo had to be reinforced against possible attack and prepared for counterattacks or other offensive operations. For the quarantine to be effective, an invasion force had to be ready. The chapters which follow present these deployments by units of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps in greater detail.

CHAPTER V

"ANCHORS AWEIGH--TO CUBA"

The Quarantine

Naval blockades have been applied by maritime nations against each other in a variety of contexts with mixed results. In her formative period, America was generally opposed to the rights of the major seafaring powers, notably Britain, to impose paper or actual blockades upon her adversaries or rivals. In the golden age of Britain's seapower when "Britannia ruled the waves," Britain asserted an aggressive interpretation of the right of blockade. America, a growing merchantilist nation with no world-power ulterior motives, asserted the rights of neutral shipping to freely access the ports of belligerents. In fact America was often the target of Britain's extensive use of the blockade as a strategy. During the Civil War, however, United States sea power began to emerge as the Union attempted to blockade the southern ports with a fair measure of success. Interference with shipping under neutral flags was later one of the causum belli for the United States entry into World War I.

Mahan described the strategy of a naval blockade as:

> It is not the taking of individual ships or convoys, be they few or many, that strikes down the money power of a nation; it is the possession of that overbearing power on the sea which drives the enemy's flag from it, or allows it to appear only as a fugitive; in which by controlling the great common [the sea], closes the highways by which commerce

moves to and from the enemy's shores". 1

This overbearing power can only be exercised by great navies. In more recent times, blockades have been less efficient than in the days when the neutral flag did not have its present immunity.2 Mahan recognized that a blockade was a very effective weapon which would sooner or later bring an enemy to its knees, but was aware of the grave defects and serious limitations of the blockade by the tremendous strain it put upon the blockaders. It was not as effective as the forthright elimination of the enemy's fleet but was preferable to seeking out the enemy upon the high seas.3

Blockades have been employed in a variety of strategies from containing an enemy's fleet in its home harbors to denying a belligerent's access to world commerce in an effort to influence a land battle or the prosecution of a land campaign. The naval quarantine imposed by President Kennedy was similar in some respects to previous blockades in history, but in many ways was unique to the emerging nuclear age. It was certainly not unusual in history for a major maritime power such as the United States had become to employ its seapower to the detriment of an adversary. But in an era of instantaneous communication with remote naval units, the

1. Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, p. 138.

2. Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery, p. 182

3. Livezey, Mahan on Sea Power, pp. 235-6

action in this case was employed more closely than ever to complement a political and diplomatic strategy. It set the stage for future military actions to be tightly controlled directly by the heads of state in their war rooms rather than by military commanders in the theatre of operations. Perhaps the most unique aspect of President Kennedy's quarantine was its objective. Its purpose was not to choke Cuba's commerce, to deny Cuba's access to military allies, to defeat it militarily, or to remove Castro from power. Its purpose was not to contain Cuba's fleet or even to deny total Soviet naval access to the island. Its stated purpose was strictly to prohibit the introduction of nuclear weapons into Cuba and to obtain the withdrawal of those already in place. The President could, of course, "tighten the screws" by expanding the orders to American naval forces, but, at least initially, his military purpose was quite limited in comparison to previous naval blockades.

The quarantine's onus was its stated intent to interfere with neutral shipping--the very objection that America had first raised in opposition to Britain's frequent employment of the blockade in her rivalry with France. At that time America was a neutral merchantilist state desirous of profiting from commerce with all belligerents. In the early 1960's the world, although tenaciously, was at peace. But what has been aptly described as a "Cold War" was certainly in progress. With the intercontinental reach of the weapons of war, and the proliferation of conventional armaments, war,

whether intended, pre-emptive, or accidental, could be unleashed with almost no warning and could virtually and instantaneously annihilate the unlucky target of the aggressor. Indeed, the situation presented to President Kennedy was largely without historical precedent.

In October of 1962 the United States Navy was the unquestioned master of the seas. Not only was its conventional might second to none anywhere in the world, but its superiority in the Caribbean theatre was overwhelming. The United States could also hope, if not for the active naval intervention of other maritime states such as Britain, at least for the tacit cooperation of other Latin American states in the region.

In anticipation of the presidential proclamation on the introduction of the delivery of offensive weapons to Cuba, the Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT) issued his operation order 45-62 in which the Second Fleet Commander (COMSECONDFLT) was designated the quarantine force commander and CTF 136. The Commander of Anti-Submarine Forces in the Atlantic (COMASWFORLANT) as CTF 81-83 was directed to conduct air surveillance as requested by the commander of the quarantine force. Following the President's proclamation, on October 24th, after receiving directions by JCS, CINCLANTFLT formally issued his blockade order. Later the word "quarantine" was substituted for "blockade".

On October 22nd COMSECONDFLT issued operation order 1-62 establishing TF 136 with himself as commander of the task

force.4 The following three task groups remained in effect throughout the quarantine:

CTF 136 COMSECONDFLT (Relieved on November 13th by COMCRUSDESFLOT SIX)

CTF 136.1 COMCRUDESFLOT SIX with 2-Cruisers; 2-DLG; 1-DDG; 9-DD; 2-DDR; 1-DDG; and 1-EDD assigned

CTG 136.2 COMCARDIV EIGHTEEN with 1-CVS and 4-DD assigned

CTG 136.3 CO, USS Elokomin with 2-AO; 1-AE; and 2-DD assigned

The ships of TG136.1 were given stations initially on an arc 500 miles from the southeastern tip of Cuba from latitude 27-30N, longitude 70W to latitude 20N, longitude 65W. There were twelve stations on this arc code named "Walnut" with 47 miles between stations. CTG 136.2 was stationed west of the general center of this arc and CTG 136.3 replenished the ships on station. This initial quarantine line was designed to be outside of the operational range of Cuban aircraft but later was moved closer to Cuba. The CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis reports that this move of the quarantine line was only made when it was later determined that the Cuban air force was in a poor state of readiness to launch attacks against the Walnut stations, but some Administration sources report that the

4. Atlantic Command, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief CINCLANT Historical account of the Cuban Crisis, U. S. Naval Base, Norfolk, Virginia 1963. The bulk of the remainder of this chapter was extracted from this document. Portions remain classified.

President pulled the quarantine back only over the objections of the Navy in order to give Khrushchev more time to act before shipping reached the line.5 The new stations were assigned the code name "Chestnut". TF 136 remained in these general positions throughout the remainder of the quarantine operations.

To keep track of the ships sighted, a special quarantine plot was established in the CINCLANT Operations Control Center on October 29th. Directed by Rear Admiral R. D. Hogle, the staff ultimately consisted of thirty officers and men.

The search area of the quarantine arc covered a vast expanse of ocean. Throughout the operation, an average of 46 ships, 240 aircraft, and approximately 30,000 personnel were directly involved in the effort to locate ships traveling to and from Cuba. U.S. Air Force RB-50 aircraft operating from their bases made daily searches of the ocean out to 400 miles south of the Azores. Naval aircraft operated from such diverse points as Roosevelt Roads, Guantanamo Bay, Bermuda, the Azores Argentia, Jacksonville, Key West, Norfolk, and Patuxent River. Searching approximately 4,500,000 square miles of ocean, the aircraft searches accounted for over 200 sightings of ships of interest to the quarantine plot. Surface ships in the quarantine force accounted for

5. Schlesinger, Arthur M., A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1965, p. 818

approximately 50 sightings. Most of the ships were first sighted by aircraft and the quarantine ships were vectored for interception.

The quarantine plot staff utilized the Remington Rand Univac Sea Surveillance Computer System to track merchant shipping to and from Cuba. Data concerning the point of departure, course, and speed for each ship was entered into the computer, which provided readouts every two hours of the the latitude and longitude of each ship being monitored.

The quarantine operations may be divided into three phases. During the first phase, from October 24th until November 4th, many suspicious ships bound for Cuba stopped in the water and turned back while some with non-suspicious cargo proceeded on. While Secretary General U Thant of the United Nations visited Cuba from October 30-1, 1962, the quarantine operations were suspended. With specific presidential authorization CTF 136 directed the U.S.S. Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. (DD-850) to intercept the Marucla, a Lebanese steam-driven vessel chartered by the Soviets. It was by sheer coincidence that the closest United States naval vessel to the Marucla was named after the President's father. The U.S.S. Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. rendezvoused with the U.S.S. John R. Pierce (DD753) and intercepted the Marucla at first light on October 26th, 1962.6 At 0610 the Kennedy, by flashing light, requested

6. Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., Report of Visit and Search of S.S. Marucla on 26 October 1962, U.S. Naval Archives, Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C.

the Marcula to stop and stated its intention to board her when her sea ladder was ready. At 0630 the Marucla advised that it was ready to receive the boarding party. At 0632 the boarding party from the Kennedy proceeded in a whale boat to the Pierce to pick up her executive officer, LCDR D. G. Osborne, who had extensive experience with merchant shipping as a merchant marine officer. The boarding officer was LCDR K. C. Reynolds, and the assistant boarding officer was Ensign E. A. Mass, who also served as a Russian interpreter. Ensign P. W. Sanger served as French interpreter and Paul J. Arnold, RMSN, was communicator. Clad in service dress white uniforms, the boarding party was unarmed but maintained continuous communications with the Kennedy with a portable AN/PRC/10 transceiver. The Kennedy remained alongside the Marucla's port quarter and was at general quarters. The Pierce remained on the Marcula's starboard quarter. During the boarding, the assistant boarding officer and the radio operator remained on the deck of the Marcula in view of the Kennedy.

The master of the ship was familar with the presidential proclamation, and he and his crew spoke good English and were cooperative during the search. The cargo of the ship, verified by bills of lading, consisted generally of sulphur, asbestos, machinery, trucks, lathes, spare automotive parts, emery powder, paper newsprint, cardboard, miscellaneous tools, etc. All holds had been battened down, but one was removed and visibly searched. In the absence of any

suspicions pointing to prohibited materials aboard, and the impracticality of further search, the boarding officer, following consultation with the Kennedy, decided that further search was not warranted. By 0910 the Marcula was cleared to proceed and the boarding party returned to the Kennedy. By 1235 surveillance of the Marcula was terminated by the task force commander.

During the second phase, from November 5-11, CINCLANTFLT promulgated the code name "Scotch Tape" followed by a numeral to identify suspected ships. During this phase "Scotch Tape" ships were observed outbound from Cuba and, using information furnished to our U.N. delegation by the Soviets, these ships were intercepted and inspected for missiles. The information provided to the U.N. delegation included the names of nine Soviet ships which would carry the missiles being removed from Cuba. In response, the United States, through the Secretary of State, provided the Soviet delegation with three locations at sea where U.S. navy ships could rendezvous with the Russian merchant ships for the agreed upon inspection. The information provided by the Soviets contained no course, speed, or route information and therefore an extensive air and surface search was undertaken to intercept the nine Soviet ships, which would not have been necessary had the Soviets lived up to their agreement to cooperate with a rendezvous. The Soviet ships appeared to make no effort to pass the designated rendezvous points nor did they depart from port on the dates specified.

Nevertheless, all nine Russian ships were located and cooperated in varying degrees to allow aerial inspection of their ships.

During the third phase from November 11-21, TF 136 was dissolved although some additional ships were trailed and six additional "Scotch Tape" ships were designated.

Throughout the quarantine operations, the only material damage sustained was a collision between Wasp and Holder during an approach by the Holder upon the Wasp for refueling. Neither ship was rendered incapable of continuing its assigned mission. The special quarantine plot was disbanded on November 26, 1962 after the Soviets had not only removed their missiles, but after they had agreed to remove the IL-28 aircraft from Cuba within thirty days.

Task Force 135

Naval operations in support of CINCLANT OPLAN 312 included the reinforcement of Guantanamo, the evacuation of dependents and non-combatants from Guantanamo, the deployment by CG FMFLANT of a four squadron Marine air group to Key West and enough squadrons to establish a three squadron Marine air group at Roosevelt Roads. The naval task force at H-hour would then strike assigned targets in Cuba and provide air defense and close air support of Guantanamo. All of these operations fell to Task Force 135.

The core of forces for what was later to become Task Force 135 was the carrier Independence which set sail from

Norfolk on October 11th for what was thought to be a routine deployment. It had been scheduled for relief by the Enterprise on October 27th but both remained at sea. COMCARDIV SIX was embarked aboard the Enterprise. The Independence was accompanied by English, Hank, O'Hare and Corry. COMSECONDFLT directed this deployment to be in or south of the Mayport area in order to reduce reaction time to a Cuban contingency at the direction of CINCLANTFLT.

The Enterprise had just returned to the United States from a European deployment on October 11th. She hurriedly set sail on October 19th, ostensibly to avoid hurricane Ella. The day after the Enterprise set sail, Rush, Hawkins, and Fiske also set sail to rendezvous with her.

On October 20th CINCLANT issued Operation Order 43-62 which commenced the naval actions in support of CINCLANT OPLAN 312. The composition of Task Force 135 to implement the 312 operations was as follows:

INDEPENDENCE with CVG 7

ENTERPRISE with CVG 6

Two destroyer squadrons

One AO

One AE

One MAG (2VMA, 1 VMF) at Roosevelt Roads

Later on October 20th CINCLANT directed COMCARDIV's TWO and SIX to move into position to execute CINCLANT OPLAN 312. The Enterprise sailed to what it believed to be the most advantageous position to do so at latitude 25N, longitude

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75W. The Independence sailed to latitude 23-10N, longitude 72-24W. Also on October 20th CINCLANTFLT directed COMNAVAIRLANT to hold the Enterprise's A-3J aircraft ashore and to take aboard a twenty plane Marine A-4D squadron in order to enhance the carrier's close air support capability.

With both carriers north of Cuba, the Enterprise was assigned to operate between longitude 76-15W and 77-30W and the Independence was to operate east of longitude76-15W. They intended to remain north of Cuba until after the first day of operations.

As the time set for the President's address to the nation approached, CINCLANTFLT directed the commander of the naval base at Guantanamo to evacuate all dependents and non-essential personnel. With Task Force 135 now operating as TG135.1 (Independence group) and TG135.2 (Enterprise group), the Joint Chiefs of Staff established DEFCON 3 worldwide as of 222300Z. Because of the relatively restricted waters between the Bahamas and the north coast of Cuba, on October 22nd, both the Enterprise and the Independence with their accompanying vessels commenced movement southward through the Windward Passage. At the request of the Guantanamo base commander, commencing on October 24th the carriers alternated continuous advance early warning patrols over the Windward Passage. To be ready for any contingency, arrangements were made to refuel daily.

Tensions heightened on the afternoon of October 26th when the Enterprise obtained a radar contact characteristic

of an enemy submarine. An A-1H aircraft was maintained over the contact until relieved by an E-1B which obtained a sinker at latitude 18-50N longitude 75-26W. Contact was lost the next day, but, because of the increasing submarine threat, Task Force 135 was shifted south of 18 degrees latitude, where the water south and southwest of Jamaica made an ideal operating area for protection against submarine threats. Additional precautions included all-night steaming at darken ship, evasive steering, zig-zagging, and the avoidance of merchant shipping to the maximum extent feasible. As the group moved further from the Windward Passage, the air patrol was finally secured on October 29th.

During November aircraft not equipped with identifying transponders approaching the task force became an increasing problem. Combat air patrols were frequently launched to intercept and identify these threats. On November 25th during the catapult launch of an F-8E aircraft to identify one of these bogeys, a fatal aircraft accident occurred.

On November 22nd TG135.1 was dissolved and the units were detached for the United States. The Enterprise returned to Norfolk on December 6th after having been continuously at sea for 49 days. Task Force 135 continued to operate in the Caribbean area with one carrier on station and the Lexington in CONUS on call from November 30th to December 15th, at which time the Lexington was relieved by the Enterprise. The task force was dissolved in time for all ships to return to home ports by December 20th.

Anti-Submarine Force Operations

During the early part of October, 1962 the United States Anti-Submarine Force Atlantic (ASWFORLANT), commanded by Vice Admiral E. R. Taylor and headquartered at Norfolk, was employed in its normal anti-submarine and surveillance operations. This activity included long range patrols, underwater sound surveillance, and HUK (hunter-killer) group operations utilizing patrol aircraft operating from bases in Ireland, Argentia, the Azores, Bermuda, Puerto Rico, Guantanamo, and the continental United States.

When the Cuban situation began to deteriorate, ASWFORLANT was alerted to the strong possibility of Soviet submarine activity in the western Atlantic. The MSTS oiler, Yerkon, observed a surface submarine, 135 miles north of Caracas, Venezuela which it was unable to identify. When DEFCON 3 was set on October 22nd, ASWFORLANT was required to increase its anti-submarine surveillance and to prepare for other more active military measures, including activation of the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom ASW barrier to prevent the deep water deployment of the Soviet surface and submarine force. On October 24th, 17 VP aircraft and 10 submarines were deployed to the naval station at Argentia to provide forces for Argentia sub-air barrier. The HUK unit, Task Group 83.2 (Task Group Alpha) was directed to rendezvous with the carrier Independence to provide ASW protection.

By October 24th CINLANTFLT was certain that at least three known Soviet submarines were operating in the north

Atlantic and, along with the possibility of others, could reach the quarantine line within a few days. Concern heightened that the Soviets would conduct submarine operations as a deliberate counter against the quarantine forces.

The U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff offered B-52 aircraft for aerial surveillance of shipping. On October 25th Strategic Air Command aircraft sighted the Soviet ship Grozny. Task Group Alpha identified a Soviet submarine on the surface as a Foxtrot class submarine on October 28th. The ASW effort was so intense that on the 31st a Soviet submarine with the number 911 painted on its tail was forced to surface after 35 hours of continuous sonar contact by ASW surface units.

New sightings of Soviet submarines continued in November when an Eastern Airlines aircraft observed a submarine submerging 69 miles north of San Juan. The Soviet submarine 945 was observed surfacing on November 6th and later on the 9th it rendezvoused with the Russian tug Pamir. Surveillance was so intense that by the 6th it was reported that air readiness could not be maintained at the present tempo of operations. One new submarine contact was also reported on November 6th and another was made on the 13th. By mid-November Soviet submarine activity in the western Atlantic was declining so that by the 19th and the 20th of November ASW forces were primarily employed in Scotch Tape operations with no significant unidentified

submarine activity reported.

The enormity of the air ASW effort during the period of October 22nd to November 22nd is illustrated by the 8,472 personnel who conducted 4,749 sorties in 23,958 flight hours. Additionally, 6,546 men on four carriers directly supported the ASW effort and U.S. Air Force aircraft flew 87 sorties in 571 hours in support of the ASW. Also assisting in the ASW effort were reservists from South Weymouth, Mass.; New York; Lakehurst, N.J.; Willow Grove, Penn.; Andrews Air Force Base, Wash. D.C.; Norfolk, Va.; Jacksonville, Fla.; New Orleans; and Glennview, Ill. They logged over 775 hours in logistic flights and 350 hours of surveillance and sighted and reported 190 different surface and underwater foreign craft, including Russian trawlers, Russian merchant ships, a Russian electronic ship and an unfriendly submarine.

South Atlantic Force Operations

United States Navy South Atlantic Forces (SOLANT) under the command of Rear Admiral J. A. Tyree received little notice of the impending crisis in Cuba. On the evening of October 22, 1962 the commmander of the South American Force of the United States Atlantic fleet was in his flagship, the U.S.S. Mullinnix steaming off the northern coast of Chile engaged in ASW exercises of Operation Unitas III with Chilean, Peruvian, and United States forces. The crew was shocked to hear the President's address over shortwave radio announcing a strict quarantine of offensive military

equipment under shipment to Cuba. On October 24th COMSOLANT was directed to return to Trinidad with key members of his staff as soon as possible. The senior Chilean and Peruvian officers in the exercise were transferred to the Mullinnix to be briefed on the situation. When they returned to their ships, command of the exercise was passed to the senior officer, Captain Maza, of the Peruvian Navy and the Mullinnix left the Unitas III task force for Callao, Peru. Upon arrival on the morning of the 25th, COMSOLANT and most of the members of his staff flew to Trinidad, arriving the morning of October 26th.

The bulk of the quarantine force was initally deployed to the northeast of Cuba, allowing free access to the Caribbean area through the Lesser Antilles passages, the island arc in the eastern Caribbean. Initially CINCLANTFLT designated COMSOLANT as the quarantine force commander of the southern approaches and directed him to form Task Torce 137 with the Mullinnix as flagship over such South American forces as would be assigned. The Organization of American States agreed to contribute forces but desired to operate as a combined force under the O.A.S. rather than under direct U.S. command, although they did not object to being placed under a U.S. commander. Accordingly, CINCLANTFLT cancelled his directive and CINCLANT designated COMSOLANT as the commander of a combined Latin American-U.S. quarantine task force, CTF 137 to be formed. The Mullinnix arrived in Trinidad on November 3rd. Previcusly on October 28th, two

Argentinian Fletcher class destroyers, ARA Rosales (ex-U.S.S. Dortch) and ARA Espora, (ex-U.S.S. Stembel), commanded by Capt. C. Arguelles sailed from their home port at Puerto Belgrano to join Task Force 137 after an extensive period at sea with only five days to reassemble. They arrived at the United States naval station at Trinidad on the morning of November 8th with a full war complement ready for combat operations. The South Atlantic staff tripled in size to accommodate naval officers and men from the Latin American countries including the formation of communication-liaison teams. The Venezuelan destroyers ARV Zulia, and ARV Nueva Esparta also arrived at the U.S. Naval Station at Trinidad. The Venezuelan submarine ARV Carite (ex-U.S.S. Tilefish) remained on call during the operation.

The Argentinian naval attache in Washington, Rear Admiral Grunwaldt, became the first foreign officer attached to the COMSOLANT staff, and served as the assistant chief of staff for Argentine operations. Lieutenant Commander Jose Ali Ericeno served as the assistant chief of staff for Venezuelan operations.

The departure of Task Force 137 on November 12, 1962 for its assigned duties in the quarantine operations marked the first time that ships of a combined Latin American/United States naval task force had ever set forth together on a operational mission in defense of the Western Hemisphere. It was the first time in the Twentieth Century that a unit of the Argentine Navy had gone into operations outside of its

home waters. The Venezuelan destroyers, Zulia and Nueva Esparta occupied patrol stations covering the passage between Grenada and the mainland of Venezuela. The Rosales patrolled the passage between the islands of Dominica and Guadaloupe. The Esparta patrolled two stations, one in the Guadaloupe passage and the other off the island of Monserrat. The Mullinnix patrolled the Anegada Passage. During their patrols, the Argentine destroyers logged 27 contacts, Venezuelan destroyers logged 71, and the U.S. destroyer Mullinnix logged 55, for a total of 153 contacts by Task Force 137.

The Dominican Republic offered two frigates, the Gregario Luperon and the Captain Petro Santana, to Task Force 137. They set sail from Santa Domingo and arrived at San Juan, Puerto Rico on November 15th, but, because of the poor condition of their engineering plants, they required immediate tender availability in order to make them ready for operations. The quarantine ended before either of these ships were put to sea.

Although censorship had been ordered of quarantine operations by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for public affairs, word of the solidarity of the free nations of the Western Hemisphere made news around the world.

Submarine Operations

As late as October 18, 1962 no units of the submarine

force of the Atlantic fleet (SUBLANT) under the command of Vice Admiral E. W. Grenfell were employed to support Cuban contingency operations. The forces were employed on a normal peacetime basis in DEFCON 5. Polaris submarines were on station in normally assigned patrol areas.

The first warning of trouble came on October 19th when CINCLANTFLT verbally advised COMSUBLANT that the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom ASW barrier might be implemented. Immediate action to implement the barrier if necessary commenced. On October 22nd CINCLANTFLT directed COMSUBLANT to disperse all units currently located in Key West to Charleston, N.C. or further north. Two days later all submarines were enroute to either Charleston or Norfolk with the U.S.S. Marlin and the U.S.S. Sea Cat rendezvousing in Miami. At that time COMSUBLANT had 77 attack submarines and 9 ballistic missile submarines employed.

When COMSUBLANT received CINCLANT's message on October 22nd raising United States forces to DEFCON 3 alert status, COMSUBLANT directed all Atlantic submarine units to load with a wartime load and to top off in ports earmarked for initial deployment. Units at sea earmarked for deployment were directed to return to port, load with wartime torpedos, and to top off for possible extended operations. From this time forward all Atlantic submarine force units maintained an uninterrupted readiness posture at the DEFCON 3 level until October 28th when CINCLANT returned United States naval forces to DEFCON 5.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis the U.S.S. George Washington and the U.S.S. Patrick Henry both served 61 day patrols. Three diesel attack submarines and one APSS were earmarked to participate in CINCLANT Cuban contingencies. COMSUBLANT also made submarines available for the covert surveillance of Cuba.

Service Force Atlantic Operations

With the massive naval forces deployed for both the Cuban contingency operations and the quarantine operations, massive amounts of replenishment and refueling were required. Before the Cuban Crisis became public knowledge, Service Squadron Four of the Atlantic Service Force (SERVLANT) was already providing mobile logistic support for the previously planned PHIBRIGLEX-62 exercise. Service Force ships also evacuated 290 persons from Guantanamo to the continental United States arriving on October 25th. By October 27th, 35,926 men (excluding Marines) were being supported by SERVLANT ships. The average usage of fuel was 42,000 barrels and this was expected to increase by 5,000 barrels upon the arrival of Pacific Command forces. From October 31st to November 19th when all ships had arrived at their assigned quarantine stations, daily underway refueling schedules were arranged so as to maintain ships with at least 70% burnable fuel on board at all times. As of November 14th the total afloat population in all task forces including troops being transported was estimated at 100,000 in 184 ships. A total

of 648 ships were refueled by fleet oilers, and service force units transferred 1,024 personnel by either helicopter or high line between ships.

The primary focus of research from original sources for this paper has been the deployment of U.S. Marine forces in response to the Cuban contingency. The following chapter summarizes much of the intelligence information provided to U.S. forces about their potential adversary. Subsequent chapters analyze the foundation of Marine expeditioinary forces from their peacetime garrison stations and their transportation to the Cuban theater for potential commitment to battle.

CHAPTER VI

"THE CUBAN THREAT"

If America ever had to go to war, 1962 was the time and Cuba was the place for victory. The United States was ready for war and Cuba was not. It had just been a scant three years earlier that the guerilla army of Fidel Castro had defeated the regular Cuban army of the dictator Fulgencio Batista in a two year campaign in which the Cuban army mobilized some thirty thousand men yet lost only about two hundred KIA's before it collapsed.1 The Cuban revolutionaries had never faced a formidable conventional foe, and the purging of internal opposition had delayed the effective consolidation of the Castro-communist regime in the country. The influx of Soviet bloc military aid had increased the Castro regime's military preparedness, but its military capability in the fall of 1962 was certainly questionable. In fact in the preceding century none of Latin America had experienced large scale conventional combat.

Weather, Terrain, and Inhabitants

The climate of Cuba is generally hot, dry, and well suited for military operations. Except for the fall and spring when rainfall is plentiful, most of the year is relatively dry with the average annual rainfall in the

1. Pimlott, John, Ed., Guerilla Warfare, The Military Press, Boston, 1985, p. 108

Guantanamo area at 26.67 inches.2 By contrast the mountain areas have an annual precipitation of over 70 inches with most of the lowland areas from 35 to 55 inches annually.3 The average temperature in the country varies from 70 degrees Fahrenheit to 81 degrees with annual variances of only 10 degrees in the semi-tropical or temperate climate. Cuba is located in the hurricane belt (Figure 4), and even though they may not actually strike the island, several will affect the area weather each year.

Half of the island is flat or rolling terrain and the remainder is hilly or mountainous. The Oriente Provence in which the Guantanamo Naval Base is located is dominated by the Sierra Maestra Mountains culminated by the Pico Turqurino (6,562 feet). The largest river, the Cauta, flows westward for 200 miles north of the Sierra Maestras but is used very little for navigation. The terrain immediately surrounding the naval base is generally hilly or mountainous with semi-desert vegetation, especially on the eastern and the western flanks of the base. The country has over 5,000 miles of all-weather roads with a central highway (the Carretera Central) which extends for 777 miles from Guane in the west to

2. Commander Guantanamo Sector Caribbean Sea Frontier, Operation Plan 316-62. On file at the Marine Corps Historical Archives at the Washington Navy Yard at Washington, D. C. and recently declassified, much of the intelligence data in this chapter is derived from this document.

3. Barron, Louis, Ed.,Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Americas, Harper & Row, New York, 1965, p. 101

LOCATION AND SIZE OF CUBA

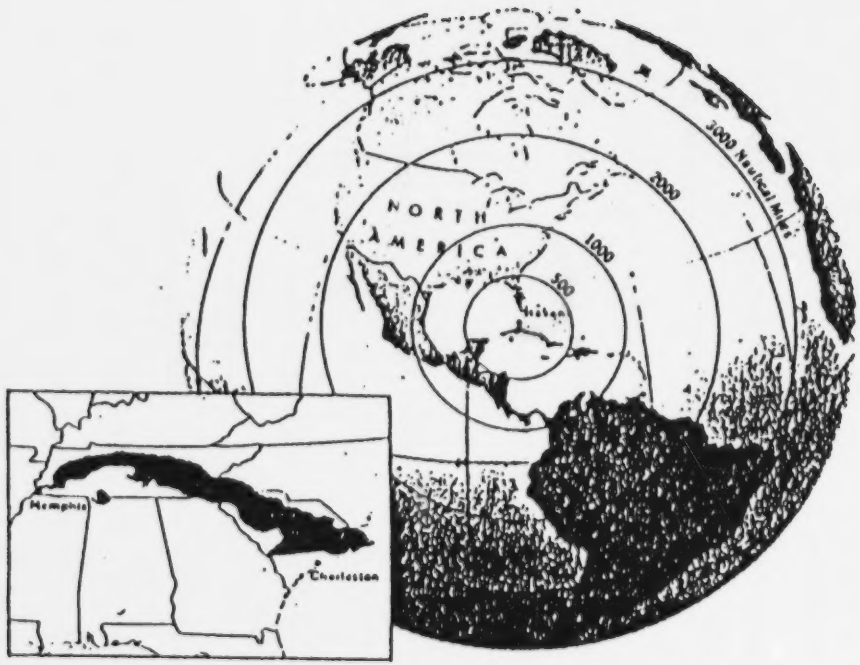


FIGURE 4

Guantanamo in the east. Connecting all major cities, this highway provides the network for an extensive truck and bus service for the transporation of passengers and freight. Two nationalized railways connect both ends of the island with a total of over 14,000 miles of industrial and passenger track miles. Land use population, density, and economic activity are depicted in Figures 5 and 6.

The Cuban coastline is marked by bays, keys, reefs, and islets. Long stretches of lowlands and swamps dominate the southern coast. Guantanamo Bay, the site of the naval base, is one of the best harbors in the world with good protection from storms and depths sufficient for handling deep draft shipping. Although the northern portion of the bay is shallow, the depth of the water falls off rapidly outside of the mouth of the harbor. The mouth of the harbor reaches 100 fathoms and the thousand fathom curve falls between 8,000 and 9,000 yards from the bay entrance. Neither of the two rivers in the immediate area, the Guantanamo or Yateras, is navigable. Fresh water for the base is obtained from the Yateras River. Most of population surrounding the naval base are either Negroid or mixed Negroid and Caucasian. Many are of Jamaican descent. The once powerful middle and upper socio-economic groups were practically eliminated by the Castro regime, most of whose supporters were from the lower economic classes. Most of the Cuban population were of the Catholic faith with many in Oriente Province mingling their Christian faith with voodoo and other primitive beliefs. The

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

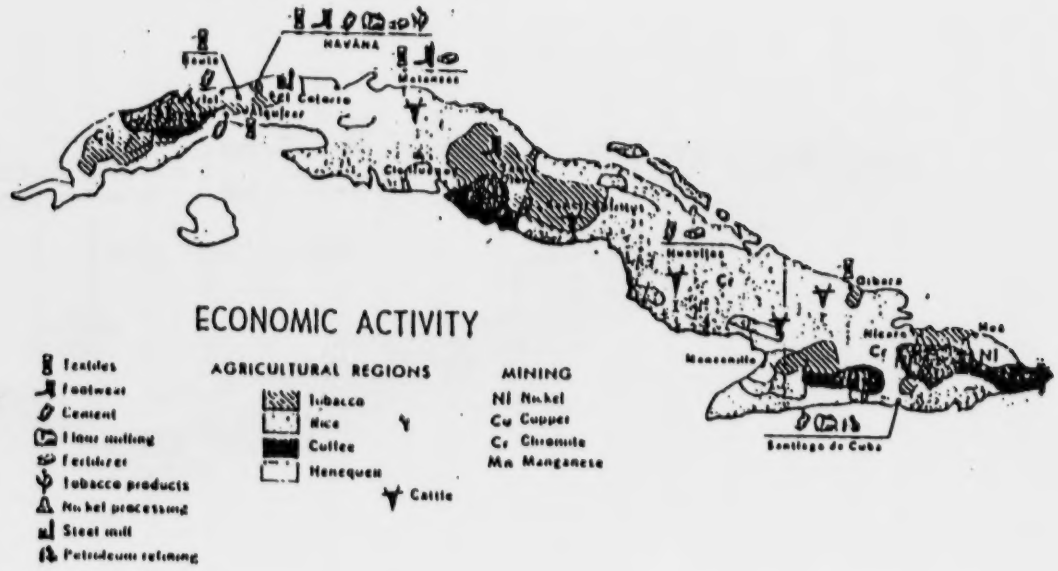


FIGURE 5

POPULATION AND LAND USE

FIGURE 6

previous influence of the Catholic church has been eliminated by Castro's deportation of large numbers of Catholic priests.

The primary economic base of the country is agriculture, with about 80 percent of its total area of 28 million acres in farmland, and 52 percent of the cultivated land in sugar cane. The United States had historically been the country's largest purchaser of its sugar cane exports until the Castro regime embraced the communist bloc. The second most important crop, tobacco, is grown on small farms requiring intensive labor cultivation. Cuban coffee is grown in the highland of Oriente Province. Also important to the country is its production of cattle, hogs, and poultry and a growing fishing industry. The third most valuable of Cuba's exports are minerals including nickel, chrome, copper, iron, and manganese. Most of the nickel deposits and plants are also located in Oriente Province. Acute shortages in consumer goods and economic deprivation of the population under the Castro regime have been partially ameliorated by foreign aid from the communist bloc, especially the Soviet Union.

Cuban Naval Forces

Cuba was divided into three naval districts each of which had a district headquarters and posts and sub-posts under their control. The northern naval district includes the northern coast of Cuba from Cabo de San Antonio to Punta de Practicos with a headquarters at Mariel. The headquarters

of the eastern naval district located in Santiago de Cuba extends on the coast from Punta de Practicos to Punta Sevilla. Cienfuegos houses the headquarters of the southern naval district which extends along the coastline from Punta Sevilla to Cabo de San Antonio. The Castro regime inherited from the Batista regime a number of patrol-sized craft and former Coast Guard cutters. An exact listing of these craft as set forth in the Guantanamo Ready Pattalion's Plan are in Appendix 2.

In addition to the obsolete U.S. supplied vessels, from January 15th to March 26th, various Soviet merchant ships delivered a total of twelve P-6 class PTs (Komar "class" fast attack missile craft) and six Kronstadt class patrol boats.4 The first Komar class craft were completed in 1961, and were equipped with two 21 inch torpedo tubes, twelve depth charges, and four 25 millimeter anti-aircraft guns. At 60 tons fully loaded, they were capable of a maximum speed of 45 knots and a maximum range of 545 nautical miles. At 22 knots they were capable of 1,400 nautical miles range.5 Although small, the Komars were a significant threat to the United States Navy ships which would support any offensive or defensive operation in the Guantanamo area. An Egyptian Navy

4. Commander in Chief Atlantic Command, CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Norfolk, Va., 1963, p. 7

5. Moore, John E., Capt. Ed., Jane's Fighting Ships 1974-5, Franklin Watts, Inc., New York, 1975, p. 565

Komar craft made naval history on July 12, 1967 by being the first naval ship in the world to sink an enemy ship with a guided missile. The West was stunned when the Komar sank the Israeli flagship destroyer Eilat with three Soviet Styx missiles at a range of over twelve miles in the Six Day War.6 On October 18th four of the Komar craft ordinarily stationed at Mariel were transfered to the Port at Banes, about 75 miles northwest of the Guantanamo Naval Base.

Cuban Air Forces

There are significant disparities between the intelligence disseminated to the Guantanamo ground forces on the Cuban air forces 7 and that apparently available to the U.S. Navy. 8 The Guantanamo ground forces were informed that there were over thirty major airfields in Cuba, but only ten of these were Class I airfields capable of handling jet aircraft. Two of these airfields, San Antonio and Holguin, were within 100 nautical miles striking distance of Guantanamo. By contrast, U.S. Navy records indicate that twenty airfields were capable of supporting MIG fighter operations.

6. O'Ballance, Edgar, No Victor, No Vanquished: The Yom Kipper Wars, Presidio Press, San Rafael, Calif. 1978, pp. 308-10. See also Herzog, Chaim, The Arab-Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East, Vintage Books, New York, 1984, pp.197-8.

7. CG 1st Marine Div., "Operation Plan 141-62 Ready BLT", pp. J-II-1-4, on file at the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

8. CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis, pp. 7-8

Appendix 3 contains the enemy aircraft inventory provided to Guantanamo ground forces. Significantly absent from this inventory is any listing for the MIG 21 "Fishbed" fighters identified to be in Cuba on September 10, 1962. Other intelligence sources have identified the number of MIG 21's to be 42.9 The older MIG-15 "Fagot" was the Soviet air force's first real entry into the jet age and was christened with fire in Korea in 1950.10

The MIG-21's were the front-line Soviet fighters in 1961 and were the first Soviet production aircraft to have a delta wing form. They also posed a significant threat to all contemplated United States military operations in the Guantanamo area.

Some Cuban naval aircraft had been stationed at Mariel Naval Air Station primarily equipped for anti-submarine warfare patrols. The Cubans possessed some old PBY Catalinas, the large ocean patrol flying boats that served the allies well in a variety of functions during World War II, and some old TBMs. Poor maintenance of both types of

9. CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis, C.I.A. reports of October 23 thru 28, 1962, ExComm National Security Files, JFK Library, Boxes 315-316. C.I.A. reports for October 1962 are available on microfilm; see Paul Kesaris, ed., "C.I.A. Research Reports: Latin America, 1946-1976." University Publications, Frederick, Md., (1982). Portions of the C.I.A. reports of October 21, 25, 26, are in Dan Caldwell, Missiles in Cuba: A Decision-Making Game Learning Resources in International Studies, New York, 1979, pp. 5-20

10. Alexander, Jean, etal. Contributors, Encyclopedia of Aviation, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1977, p. 131

aircraft and their electronic equipment limited them to daylight visual search and they were not considered much of a threat.

Intelligence also substantiated that approximately 75 Cuban pilots who had received MIG jet fighter training in Czechoslovakia had returned to Cuba during the summer of 1961. Under Soviet leadership, a pilot training school had been established near Havana at the San Antonio de Los Banos airfield.

Also conspicuously absent from the aircraft inventory provided to the Guantanamo ground forces was any reference to the IL-28 "Beagle" bombers which were to figure so prominently in the high level negotiations for their removal between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev. With a combat radius of 740 nautical miles and the capability to deliver nuclear weapons, the "Beagle" could strike deep into the continental United States and certainly could have posed a significant threat to Guantanamo operations. Soviet merchant ships carrying crates on their decks resembling those of Beagle transport crates were photographed on September 16, 28, and 29 and on October 2nd. The first bomber was actually assembled during the week of October 12-17 at San Julian Airfield. Additional Beagles at Holguin Airfield were later confirmed for a total of 42 crated bombers. Twenty were in various stages of assembly before they were shipped back to the Soviet Union at the insistence of President Kennedy.

Enemy Ground Forces

The implementation of Castro's stated purpose of creating a major power armed force was in the embryonic stages in the fall of 1962. Both regular army and Revolutionary National Militia (reserve and voluntary forces) reported directly to the Minister of the Armed Forces. Cuba was divided into six military districts with three areas of responsibility. Guantanamo was located in the eastern area consisting only of Oriente Province. Camaguey and Las Villas Provinces composed the central area and Matanzas, La Habana, and Pinar del Rio Provinces composed the western area.

The army and the militia were considered to be the backbone of the Cuban armed forces and had been employed against counter-revolutionaries, but nevertheless lacked organization and training above the battalion level. Artillery training under the guidance of Soviet bloc advisors had been integrated to the extent that there was a limited capability of utilizing battery fire with forward observers. Guantanamo ground forces estimated that the Cuban army and militia had the weapons and equipment set forth in Appendix 4.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis 48 Cuban divisions and 300 battalions, some of which were subordinate to the divisions, were identified. Although not listed in the Guantanamo ground forces schedule of weapons and equipment, other sources estimated there to be 35 to 40 modern Soviet T-54 medium tanks, many of which were confirmed to be at

Santiago de Las Vegas.11 The Cubans also had the PT-76 amphibious tanks which were later to confront U.S. forces in Vietnam who were surprised to find their adversary fielding an armored force.

Soviet ground forces drawn from elite guard units were stationed primarily at four locations in Cuba: Artemisa, Santiago de Las Vegas, Remedios, and Holguin. Approximately 1,000 to 1,500 Soviet personnel organized into regimental task forces were stationed at each camp. Each task force consisted of a medium tank battalion (32 medium tanks), an armored reconnaissance company, an armored infantry company (or possibly battalion), a multiple rocket launcher battery, a nuclear capable FROG (free rocket over ground) artillery battalion (of a least two launchers) and a Snapper anti-tank company with about nine triple launchers. The FROG's and Snappers were thought to be maintained principally under Soviet control at the four camps.

When Cuban army forces were mobilized around the 22nd or 23rd of October, they demonstrated that their Soviet bloc training had paid off. They mobilized and assumed their defensive positions quickly with a minimum of confusion despite continuing logistic deficiencies. The Cuban army still lacked motor transport, proper individual field clothing and equipment, and adequate provisions for feeding troops in the field. There were unverified reports that

11. Note 9, supra

several Cuban army units left their field positions when they experienced hardship due to lack of food and proper rainwear. Demobilization was completed about a month later on November 25th.

Also during the early part of September 1962, Soviet surface to air missiles in Cuba were detected. Seven SA-2 Guideline SAM sites were detected on September 1, 1962 capable of hitting targets up to 60,000 feet with a slant range capability of about 25 miles. Additional limited capability extended to 80,000 feet. Construction of these sites was rapid, and by September 6th the number of confirmed sites had risen to 10. Three weeks later on October 1st the count had risen to 24. On September 19th cruise missiles with ranges of 25 to 35 nautical miles were detected at Banes. Two more were located on September 28th and by the middle of October there were five. All defensive missile sites were manned by Soviet personnel and were expected to remain so for at least a year since adequate training for Cubans would take at least that length of time.

CHAPTER VII

"THE BIG PICTURE"

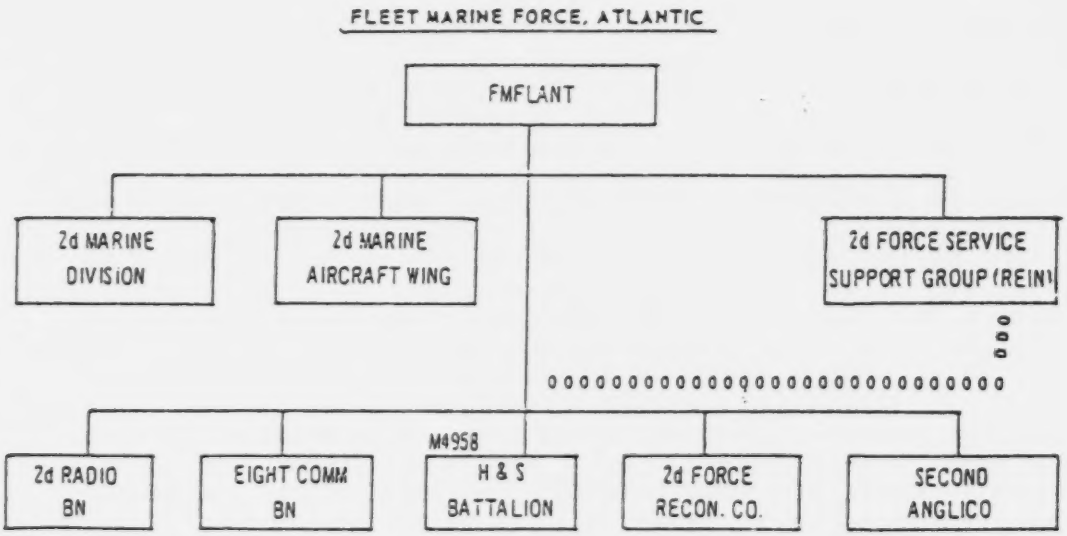
Although the United States Marine Corps is a maritime service with many Marines stationed at overseas bases and deployed afloat on Navy ships, by far the greatest majority of the total force is stationed within the continental United States. Troops in garrison, are assigned to division, wing, and force service support group units. Ground units are subdivided into regiments, battalions, companies, and platoons. On the west coast the 1st Marine Division is stationed at Camp Pendleton, California and the 3rd Marine Air Wing (MAW) is stationed at the Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro, California. On the east coast the 2nd Marine Division is stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and the 2nd Marine Air Wing is stationed at the Marine Corps Air Station, New River, North Carolina. Both east and west coasts have Force Service Support Groups to which armor, amphibious assault, and artillery units are assigned. The component units of these commands can be flexibly assembled into larger or smaller expeditionary task forces to meet needed contingencies. Smaller combinations are also often deployed in peacetime.1 (Figures 7 and 8)

Both the east coast and west coast units are organized under the general umbrella commands of a Three Star General

1. Fleet Marine Forces Organization, Education Center, Marine Corps Development and Education Command, Quantico, Virginia 1980, pp. 1-10

FLEET MARINE FORCE

A Fleet Marine Force is a balanced force of combined air and ground arms primarily trained, organized, and equipped for offensive amphibious employment. It may consist of a headquarters, Force Service Support Group (FSSG), one or more Marine divisions, one or more Marine aircraft wings, and may include one or more Marine brigades. At the present ime there are two such forces in existence: Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic (FMFLANT), with headquarters at Norfolk, Virginia, and Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, (FMFPAC), with headquarters at Camp H. M. SMITH, Hawaii. As an example, the administrative, and training organization of Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, is shown schematically , while Fleet Marine Force, Pacific is not shown, it should be noted that FMFLANT and FMFPAC differ considerably in organization.



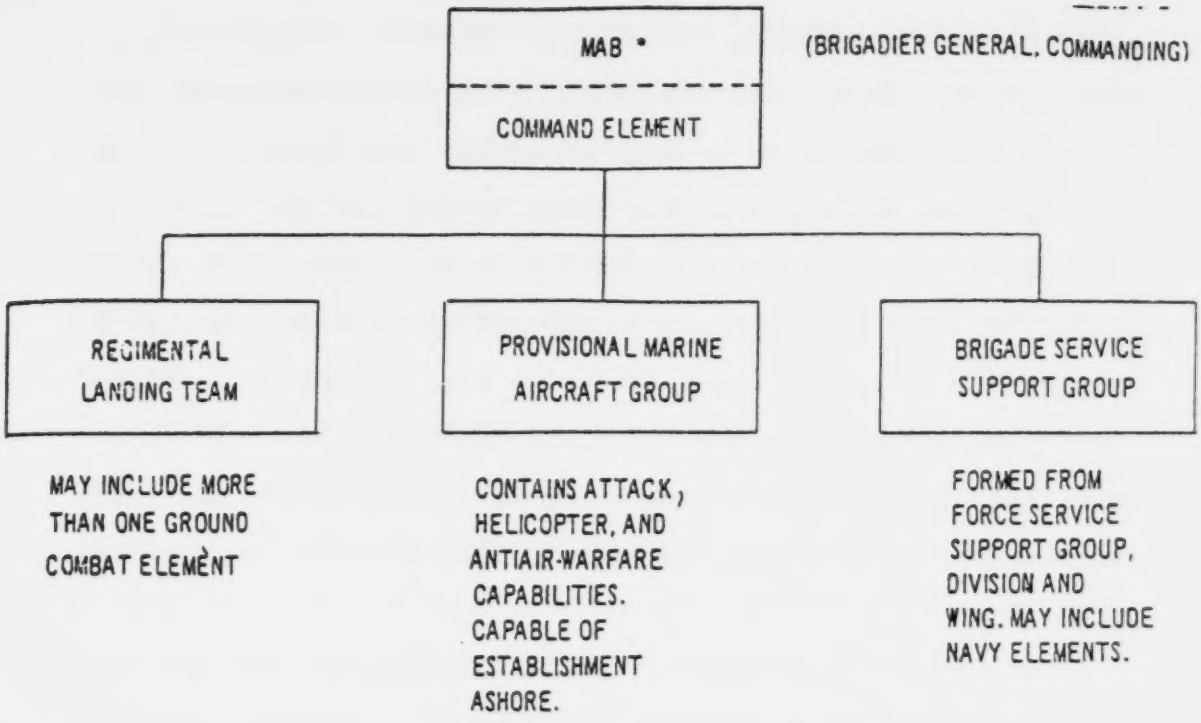
NOTE

1. oooo - INDICATES A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP (EXPLAINED BELOW)
2. SECOND RADIO BN - OPCON TO FMFLANT: ADCON SECOND FSSG
3. EIGHT COMM. BN - OPCON TO FMFLANT: ADCON SECOND FSSG
4. SECOND FORCE RECON CO. OPCON ADCON. SECOND FSSG. OPERATIONAL TASKING FROM CG FMFLANT VIA SECOND FSSG
5. SECOND ANGLICO - OPCON ADCON SECOND FSSG: OPERATIONAL TASKING FROM CE FMFLANT VIA SECOND FSSG

Reprinted from Fleet Marine Force Organization 1980, Education Center, Marine Corps Development and Education Command, Quantico, Virginia

FIGURE 7

MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE


MAB *
(BRIGADIER GENERAL, COMMANDING)
COMMAND ELEMENT
REGIMENTAL LANDING TEAM
PROVISIONAL MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP
BRIGADE SERVICE SUPPORT GROUP
MAY INCLUDE MORE THAN ONE GROUND COMBAT ELEMENT
CONTAINS ATTACK, HELICOPTER, AND ANTIAIR-WARFARE CAPABILITIES. CAPABLE OF ESTABLISHMENT ASHORE.
FORMED FROM FORCE SERVICE SUPPORT GROUP, DIVISION AND WING. MAY INCLUDE NAVY ELEMENTS.

*MAY BE EMPLOYED SEPARATELY OR AS AN ADVANCE FORCE OF A MAF

Reprinted from Fleet Marine Force Organization 1980, Education Center, Marine Corps Development and Education Command, Quantico, Virginia

FIGURE 8

as Fleet Marine Forces Atlantic or Pacific, respectively. When a force larger than regimental size is contemplated for either a deployment or to meet an actual contingency, it is usually task organized into a force formed for the occasion and dubbed "expeditionary". Regiments are composed of three battalions and, if deployed in an amphibious mode, called a regimental landing team (RLT). When deployed aboard amphibious shipping, battalion-sized units are referred to as battalion landing teams (BLT). A battalion is the smallest Marine unit ordinarily designed for independent amphibious operation.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis the headquarters of the Fleet Marine Force Atlantic (FMFLANT) remained at its permanent station at Norfolk, Virginia, and also remained subject to its ordinarily assigned chain of command under the Commander in Chief of Atlantic Naval Forces.

As the Cuban situation began to deteriorate, FMFLANT entered what has been characterized as the increased readiness phase, from October 1-18, 1962. The deployment phase in which Marine amphibious forces were enroute to perform assigned actual or contingency missions was the deployment phase from October 19th through the 30th. The prolonged alert phase was from October 31st to November 28th, and the stand down phase during which units were redeployed to their home stations was from November 29th through December 15th.2

2. Atlantic Command, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief.

During the increased readiness phase, Marine forces began planning to execute CINCLANT OPLANS 312-62, 314-62, and 316-62. Primarily this involved the prepositioning of certain aviation ground support equipment for the use of Marine air units at the Naval Air Station at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, and the Naval Air Station at Key West, Florida.

Within two days of the discovery of the medium range ballistic missiles in Cuba, FMFLANT deployed 2nd MAW to Roosevelt Roads, Key West, and the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Enterprise. A 2nd Marine Division infantry battalion was deployed to the Guantanamo Naval Base airlifted by 2nd MAW transport aircraft. A battalion landing team from Caribbean amphibious exercises then in progress was landed by the U.S. Navy ships of PHIBRON-8, and a reinforced battalion from the 1st Marine Division was airlifted to Guantanamo by the Military Air Transit Service (MATS).

The day after President Kennedy announced to the nation and the world the imposition of a naval quarantine around Cuba, the Commanding General of FMFLANT activated the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) and, as its commanding general, reported to the Commander of Amphibious Task Force 128 for embarkation. Within seven days ground units of the

2. cont. CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis, U.S. Naval Base, Norfolk, Virginia, 1963, pp. 153-61; Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, Command Diary of Headquarters FMFLANT and II MEF, Norfolk, Virginia, 1963, pp. 1-14. Both are available from the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Wash. D.C

2nd Marine Division, aviation command elements, and helicopter units completed their embarkation. Pacific Fleet Marine Forces (FMFPAC) supplied two fixed wing jet attack squadrons, six G-V aircraft and the 3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Missile (LAAM) battalion. The reassignment was accomplished by "chopping" the units from their ordinary chain of command in FMFPAC to the operational command of the II MEF. Assignment of operational control in this manner can be accomplished without physically moving the unit in question, but, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, all of these were in fact deployed to the east coast except VMA-223, a ground attack squadron normally assigned to 3rd MAW.

The following units were deployed to the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force in response to the Cuban Missile Crisis:3

Headquarters FMFLant
2d Marine Division (-)
RLT-8
BLT 3/8
BLT 2/8
BLT 3/6
BLT 2/2
BLT 2/6
BLT 1/2

4th MEB (-)
Headquarters RLT 6
1 Bn 22 Mar

2d MAW (-)
VMA 331(-)
VMF 333
HqSqFMFLANT

RLT 2
BLT 2/2
BLT 1/6
BLT 3/2
3DBN(-), 10th Mar

MAG 26 (-) (Reinf)
VMA 331
VMF 333

HMM 261
HMM 264

Sub Unit HMM 262

MAG 26(-)
Force Troops FMFLANT

3. CG FMFLANT, Command Diary of Hqtrs FMFLANT and II MEF, pp. 1-3-b-1-2

By the time FMFLANT entered the third phase of its response to the Cuban Missile Crisis, more than 25,000 Marines were enroute to the Cuban theater with logistic support adequate for at least 15 days of combat. Additional logistic support was ready for shipment.

On November 29, 1962, the Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Fleet directed a withdrawal of forces from the Cuban contingency. A relaxation of readiness measures followed and the deployed units were returned to their own stations. Most were home by December 15th.

Preliminary plans for the embarkation of the II MEF had originally contemplated that the commanding general would embark on the U.S.S. Mt. McKinley. The 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) had previously been deployed to the Caribbean to conduct routine amphibious exercises dubbed PHIBRIGLEX-62. Its amphibious command ship was the U.S.S. Francis Marion. At that time there were insufficient command and control ships for the magnitude of the operations planned as the commanding generals of the 4th MEB and of the II MEF both required an amphibious command and control ship from which to command their anticipated operations. The U.S.S. Pocono, an amphibious command ship, was hurriedly recalled from the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean to serve as a command ship for the Commanding General of the II MEF and his staff. However, during the crisis the CG II MEF and his staff remained in garrison at Norfolk because of superior communication facilities ashore.

The Fleet Marine Forces in the Atlantic and the II MEF performed a variety of operations during the crisis from the evacuation of dependents from the Guantanamo Naval Base to flying reconnaissance flights over Cuban territory. They prepared for the defense of Guantanamo, for limited aerial attacks on specified military targets in Cuba, and prepared to conduct an amphibious assault by the II MEF in joint operations with other services to seize Cuba.

The Commanding General of the 2nd Marine Division and his headquarters which was to serve as the command element of Landing Group West embarked aboard the U.S.S. Mt. McKinley on October 30th. On the same day the headquarters of the 4th MEB which had been afloat for the PHIBRIGLEX-62 exercises was deactivated and its personnel and equipment were absorbed into the headquarters of Landing Group West.

The following chapters depict in greater detail the specific operations of many of the units involved and especially the tasks which they undertook. The massive response required of the United States Marine Corps to the Cuban Missile Crisis was much larger than any training deployment would ever have been in peacetime. Seldom are contingency plans and operating procedures put to the "acid test" that occurred during the Cuban Missile Crisis. In the few brief tension-filled days of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the United States Marine Corps demonstrated its capability to muster and project massive combat amphibious forces in support of the foreign policy of the country's national

command authority, the President of the United States.

CHAPTER VIII

"THE REINFORCEMENT OF GUANTANAMO"

For decades the United States Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay on the southeastern tip of Cuba had been a United States naval base whose presence had been welcomed by the host government. Consequently there had been no external threat or challenge to its security. By treaty with Cuba, the United States' right to the use of the five by nine mile base could only be terminated by the United States' abandoning the area or by mutual agreement. Since it was originally built, advances in the operating range of naval and merchant vessels lessened its strategic military importance. But at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, it was a major command of the 10th Naval District in the Caribbean Sea frontier capable of providing medium base facilities for the accomplishment of training missions. There were seven component activities on the base, the naval station, naval air station, Marine barracks, hospital, dental clinic, supply clinic, and public works, and two fleet commands, the Fleet Training Group and Utility Squadron Ten, permanently stationed there. Approximately 4,000 military personnel and 280 U.S. civilian personnel, as well as 2,700 dependents and 2,500 indigenous personnel were normally assigned to Guantanamo.

The Marine barracks was also augmented by a tank platoon, an artillery battery, a self-propelled artillery platoon from Camp Lejeune, and a rifle company from the Caribbean contingency battalion. Routinely the forces

conducted exercises in which they took positions along the main lines of resistance under simulated combat conditions. However, these exercises usually lasted less than twelve hours and were held during daylight. It would not be easy, however, in the face of determined military opposition to maintain the base. The base was vulnerable to an external threat such as that which was amassing beyond its boundaries in the fall of 1961.

Almost overnight, with the rise to power of a communist dictator in the country, the peaceful surroundings of the base began to change. From a naval outpost in a friendly host country, it became the target of government-sponsored anti-American sentiment. The removal of the base also became a political objective of the host government. Furthermore, hostile Cuban and Soviet troops and military equipment began deploying in its vicinity. By October, 1962, Guantanamo was a beachhead in hostile territory.

As such it presented a delicate challenge in an era of Cold War confrontation. The Soviets had only recently attempted to employ their military muscle to force the allies out of Berlin, and it was reasonable to expect similar challenges elsewhere whenever and wherever the Soviets perceived a possibility of success. The base thus became a "two-edged sword" in America's hand. On one hand, it could become a dangerous pawn in super-power military and political conflict that might require a military commitment not commensurate with its strategic value as a military

installation. At the same time it could be a base from which to launch offensive operations against Cuba should the need arise.

In the Cold War world of the early 1960's any sign of weakness by the West was a target for exploitation by the communists parries. Because Castro's demands for American withdrawal from the base were bolstered by Soviet rhetoric and at least some degree of military support, to have acquiesced would have demonstrated America's lack of resolve and would have undermined the confidence and support of our allies, particularly in Europe. To have allowed the base to be used as a bargaining chip in confrontations or negotiations in other parts of the world would also nave demonstrated a willingness to withdraw in the face of pressure.

The commander of the Naval Antilles Defense Command was normally assigned responsibility by the Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Fleet for the overall coordination and defense of the Guantanamo Naval Base. Studies completed in early 1962 delineated a number of deficiencies in the defense capability of Guantanamo should there be a sudden concerted attack by Cuban forces.

A variety of effort had already been initiated to improve defenses. Air search radar capabilities had been a serious deficiency and the Commanding General of Fleet Marine Force Atlantic Forces was directed to provide the personnel and equipment necessary to support a TPS-15 air search radar.

This was completed by October 22, 1962.

As late as October 6th the only anti-air warfare capability available to the base was provided by F8U aircraft of Utility Squadron 10 as well as ships undergoing refresher training in the area. It was also recognized that Hawk or Redeye missiles systems were needed for defense against no warning, low level air strikes. With the influx of Soviet SA-2 radar, the KOMAR guidance system, and surface to surface missiles, it became apparent that there was a lack of intelligence data to actively counter these threats. Much of this data could only be obtained from sources outside usual naval intelligence channels, and an aggressive effort to do so was instituted.

Two mobile construction battalions in September commenced work improving ground defense fortifications. A list of targets posing a direct threat to the Guantanamo Naval Base was forwarded from the Antilles Defense Command to be incorporated into the OPLAN 312 target list and assignments on October 18th.

Water for the base was normally provided from the Yateras water plant north of the base which was under Cuban government control. In the event this source was eliminated, plans were made to have naval auxiliary oilers and tankers readied to haul water when required. Base defense plans were to include an attack to the northeast to capture the water plant should the need arise. Additionally, two surgical teams carrying fifty pints of whole blood were transferred

from New York and Bethesda to Guantanamo, arriving on October 23rd.

Another major problem was the presence of almost 3,000 non-combatants, including the dependent families of military personnel stationed aboard Guantanamo. By mid-afternoon on October 21st the situation had deteoriated sufficiently that the evacuation of these dependents was ordered. Amphibious landing ships were enroute to Guantanamo, and these ships, along with aircraft bringing in additional Marine combat units were directed to evacuate the civilians. Most were evacuated by the U.S.S. Upshur, U.S.S. Hyades, U.S.S. Duxbury Bay and U.S.S. DeSoto County. Air and sea escort for the ships transporting non-combatants was provided by COMCARIBSEAFRON.

One of the most critical deficiencies in the defense of the base was the size of the ground defense force. A Marine Barracks consisting of four companies of Marines was normally assigned to the naval base, which, at the time of the Crisis, was commanded by Col. George W. Killen. This force alone was totally inadequate to defend the base against a concerted attack, especially considering that the bay almost divided the base in half. This split the defense force into two virtually non-supporting elements. However, by October 18th the entire combat capability of the Atlantic Command of the United States Navy was concentrated on the Cuban contingency.

In order to accommodate the large influx of incoming battalions into Guantanamo, it was necessary to establish a

more extensive command structure than was routinely stationed aboard the base. The chief of staff of Joint Task Force 4 at Fort Monroe, Virginia was Marine Brigadier General W. R. Collins. On October 19th he received orders from the Commander in Chief of Atlantic Forces to report to Guantanamo by the following day for duty as the ground forces commander. On the same day he received his orders, he organized a skeleton provisional staff with personnel drawn from east coast Marine installations. The newly organized staff composed of eleven officers and twelve enlisted men assembled at the headquarters of FMFLANT in Norfolk, Virginia on Saturday morning and, after a short briefing, took a flight which landed at McCalla Airfield at Guantanamo that afternoon. Upon their arrival, the base was in DEFCON 3 set by the commander of the Antilles Defense Command located at San Juan, Puerto Rico.1

Prior to the arrival of reinforcements, Companies A and B of the Marine Barracks and Company C (Mobile Construction Battalion-4) supported by an artillery battery and a self-propelled artillery platoon manned the eastern perimeter and comprised the windward force.2 The Caribbean contingency company stationed on the base at the time was Company E of

1. CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis, pp. 90-102. Much of this chapter is extracted from this source.

2. Commanding General, Command Diary of Ground Forces, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba 19 October - 12 December 1962; Commander Guantanamo Sector Caribbean Sea Frontier, Operation Plan 316-62, 1962. Both are on file at the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Wash. D.C., pp. 1-12. Much of this chapter was also extracted from these sources.

2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines (2/2). Reinforced with a tank platoon, artillery battery, 106 mm recoilless rifles, and 81 mm mortars manned by Seabees, they occupied the western perimeter and comprised the leeward force. General Collins immediately conducted a helicopter reconnaissance of the base to plan for the employment of reinforcements which were expected to begin arriving the following morning.

The challenge facing General Collins was intense. His mission was to defend the base and be prepared to expand the defensive perimeter, including the seizure and control of the Yateras water plant. It was also critical to hold the vital Leeward Airfield with a runway capable of accommodating jet aircraft to preserve the access of reinforcements by air. Its seizure would severely cripple efforts to rapidly reinforce the base, as would any mortar, rocket, or artillery attack upon either of the airfield complexes.

General Collins made the on the spot decision to send the initial airlifted company from the west coast to reinforce the Caribbean contingency company already present on the leeward main line of resistance in order to better defend that airfield.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff directed late on October 18th that aircraft from the Military Air Transit Service (MATS) transport a reinforced infantry battalion landing team (BLT) from the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) on the west coast to Guantanamo. This had not been anticipated in previous contingency planning, but after rapid coordination,

the Second Battalion of the First Marines (BLT 2/1) commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William Geftman, was selected and was prepared to embark from El Toro, California on the evening of October 19th. The organic units of the battalion were formally alerted at 0730 that morning and with striking speed were ready to depart by 1600 that afternoon. All attached units were ready to move out by 2000 that night. A delay of thirty hours at El Toro for the arrival of MATS aircraft was due in part to difficulty at MATS headquarters in understanding the 1st Marine Division's message which transmitted the airlift requirements. The first increment departed El Toro on the morning of the 21st and the last increment arrived at Guantanamo late in the evening of October 22nd. The airlift involved 1,797 personnel and 130,222 pounds of cargo flown in 89 MATS sorties.3

When BLT 2/1 landed, Company E was originally moved into a position on the leeward main line of resistance in order to provide additional security for arriving reinforcements at Leeward Airfield. The remainder of the battalion, F,G, and H companies, were immediately ferried across the bay to the sea-plane landing on Fisherman's Point where Lieutenant Colonel Huntington's Marines had landed in 1898. From there they were placed in positions along the windward main line of

3. Commanding Officer, Command Diary of BLT 2/1, 1963, pp. 1-9 and Commanding Officer, Ready BLT 2/1 Operation Plan 141-62, pp.1-2. Both are on file at the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

resistance where they relieved the Marine barrack's companies and the Mobile Construction Battalion-4 Company.

The 2nd Marine Division always maintains one battalion in a advanced state of alert at all times for airlifted contingencies. On Friday, October 19, 1962 the First Battalion of the Eighth Marines (1/8) commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James E. Wilson made a routine exchange of alert responsibilities between the division's battalions. Even though it was the division's "ready battalion," 1/8 did not have any reinforcing or combat service support elements, which would later necessitate a redistribution of the resources dedicated to other units to make it self-sufficient. But on Saturday, October 20th, the alert was not a drill and Company B departed Camp Lejeune for Cherry Point and arrived in Guantanamo on the following evening. B Company was placed under the operational control of BLT 2/1, moved across the bay, and phased in along the windward main line of resistance. As other companies of 1/8 arrived by air at Leeward Airfield, companies of BLT 2/1 were moved across the bay into positions on the windward main line of resistance in order to defend the vital area of the base. Immediately after landing, companies C, D and E of 1/8 were moved into tactical positions to provide security around the airfield for further arrivals, while H&S Company unloaded incoming aircraft.

With all the hurried planning that the Cuban contingency required, the Guantanamo defenders were due for a stroke of

good luck. A large amphibious exercise dubbed PHIBRIGLEX-62 had long been planned in the Caribbean to land a regimental landing team (RLT) on Vieques Island in Puerto Rico to be opposed by composite companies of approximately 500 aggressor troops from the Schools Demonstration Troops normally stationed at Quantico, Virginia and a force reconnaissance company. A regimental headquarters was already deployed on Vieques as the control group. The exercise was quickly cancelled, freeing the units involved for the "real thing." At the same time on October 21st that CINCLANT was directed to airlift a battalion from Camp Lejuene to Guantanamo, he was also directed to land the Caribbean Ready Battalion at Guantanamo. That battalion, BLT 2/2, had been participating in PHIBRIGLEX-62. Instead of rendezvousing with other amphibious shipping for the Vieques landing, it embarked in PHIBRON-8, continued to sail west, and arrived at the mouth of Guantanamo Bay on Monday morning, October 22nd.

At 0915 the command was given to command to "land the landing force" and in less than an hour Lieutenant Colonel David Brewster Sr.'s Marines were ashore to the rear of the leeward main line of resistance. From there they moved forward and relieved in place the companies of 1/8, freeing them to be whisked across the bay into reserve blocking positions behind BLT 2/1. When the Marines of BLT 2/2 were ashore, the Navy ships on which they had been embarked took on many of the base's dependents and set sail for the United States. With the evacuation of these dependents, the base

was truly on a combat footing, functioning as an advance naval base under the security of U.S. Marine forces.

. The headquarters battery of the Second Battalion of the Tenth Marines (2/10) commanded by Major T.B. White, Jr. also landed at Leeward Point Airfield on the morning of October 22nd. A fire support coordination center was then established for the ground forces on the windward side in a bomb shelter in the vicinity of McCalla Field. Also in place on the windward side were 105 mm howitzer batteries of B Battery, 1/11, X battery, and some personnel from K Battery of 4/10. Since August, K Battery of 4/10 with six 155 mm howitzers and a platoon of 155 mm self-propelled guns from the Second Field Artillery Group of Force Troops of FMFLANT had also augmented the fire support capability on the windward side. The 105 mm howitzers of I Battery of 3/10 and the 4.2 mm mortars of D Battery of 1/11 provided fire support for the leeward side.

Since 1/8 had arrived with no artillery support, two artillery forward observer teams, a liaison team, and a shore-fire control party to direct naval gunfire were assigned to them. The survey of both sides of the bay was initiated immediately under the supervision of First Lieutenant H.M. Snook to assist in the registration of artillery fires. Together these artillery batteries formed a provisional artillery group with a command post established in an evacuated ammunition bunker situated near the ground forces headquarters in the Cuzco Valley. Nearby was the

famous Cuzco well, which had been an objective of the Marines in the 1898 campaign.

The headquarters of the Sixth Marines (RLT-6) commanded by Colonel R.W.L. Bross was originally to form the umpire control group for PHIBRIGLEX-62. They had been off-loaded at Vieques Island, but they were redeployed by airlift to Guantanamo where they assumed control of the windward forces, by then composed of BLT 2/1, 1/8, and the provisional artillery group.

As reinforcements began arriving, Mobile Construction Battalions 4 and 7 began the construction of front line positions, access roads, bunkers, command posts, and troop facilities. Initially, communication was a problem, but by October 26th all radio networks were backed up by parallel wire communication.

Marine Air Group (MAG) 32 commanded by Colonel T.L. Bronleewee, Jr. had been tasked with providing air support for PHIBRIGLEX-62. Its headquarters, however, deployed to Guantanamo on October 23rd and assumed operational control of VMF 333 and VMA 331 which had previously been positioned at Roosevelt Roads for PHIBRIGLEX-62. Also assigned to MAG 32 were detachments of VCMJ-2 and MASS-1 and four KC-130F's which provided in-flight refueling between Roosevelt Roads and eastern Cuba. When Colonel Bronleewee's headquarters arrived in Guantanamo, a direct air support center was set up in the bomb shelter at McCalla Field which by then had been vacated by the provisional artillery group's fire support

coordination center. Additionally, on October 21st, VMA-225 was deployed by CINLANTFLT to the U.S.S. Enterprise where it remained on alert until December 5th.

Earlier on October 18th, CINCLANT had requested the Joint Chiefs of Staff to transfer a light anti-aircraft missile battalion of Hawk missiles from the Pacific Command to the Atlantic Command. The Third Light Anti-Aircraft Missile (LAAM) Battalion at Twenty-Nine Palms equipped with Hawk surface to air missiles was designated and the Commandant of the Marine Corps directed on October 20th that this unit deploy to Guantanamo. The battalion staged at George Air Force and, in 92 MATS sorties, 522 personnel, and 2,539,500 pounds of cargo were transported beginning on the 23rd and ending with the last aircraft landing at the Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point, North Carolina on the 25th. But when liaison officers reviewed maps of the Guantanamo area, they agreed that only one battery of Hawk missiles could be effectively utilized in the small area of the naval base. Charlie Battery of 3rd LAAM Battalion was selected to go on to Guantanamo and was airlifted in 24 sorties of KC-130F's along with 48 Hawk missiles. Upon arrival it was chopped to MAG 32 and emplaced on John Paul Jones Hill. Within a few hours it was operational. The remainder of 3rd LAAM Battalion remained at Cherry Point under the operational control of the Second Marine Air Wing.4

By the 1st of November the positions of the Marines defending the naval base were well consolidated. BLT 2/1 and

1/8 had assumed control of all sentry points along the main line of resistance on the windward side. BLT 2/2 had assigned its reconnaissance platoon the mission of maintaining sentry posts along the leeward fence line as well as patrolling the Guantanamo River and the area forward of the main line of resistance but still within the boundary lines of the base. Naval gunfire support was provided by five destroyers. Three were always on station in three fire support areas designated southwest of the base, southeast of the base, and in the upper harbor area. The crews practiced fire control drills with the shore fire control parties in support of the front line position and a constant watch was maintained on the fire control nets.

The following weeks found the Marines dug in at Guantanamo hosting a number of VIP visits. On October 31st the commanding general of the Second Marine Air Wing, Major General R.C. Mangrum, visited, followed on November 7th by Rear Admiral N. Johnson, the commander of Amphibious Group III, and Brigadier General W.T. Fairbourn, the commanding general of the Fifth Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB). By then the 5th MEB had passed through the Panama Canal and was in the Caribbean within striking distance of Cuba.

4. Commanding Officer, Report of Operations of 3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Missile Battalion, 1962, pp.1-2. This document is also on file at the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

The 187th birthday of the Marine Corps on November 10th found most Guantanamo Marines eating birthday cake on the front lines. However, 50% of the officers met at the Officer's Club for a birthday celebration hosted by Rear Admiral E.J. O'Donnell, the commander of the naval base and Brigadier General Collins, the commanding general of the ground forces. Three days later the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David M. Shoup, Major General L.F. Chapman, the G-4 of the Marine Corps, and Rear Admiral Wendt arrived by A3D jet at Leeward Point Airfield. Admiral R. L. Dennison, the Commander in Chief of all Atlantic Naval Forces and his Deputy Chief of Staff for contingency plans, Lieutenant General L.W. Truman of the United States Army, arrived at McCalla Airfield on November 15th.

The commanding general of Fleet Marine Forces in the Atlantic, Lieutenant General R.B. Luckey, accompanied by Vice Admiral H. Rievero, the commander of amphibious forces in the Atlantic, and Major General R.C. Mangrum, the commanding general of the Second Marine Air Wing, arrived on November 20th. The Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Fred Korth, arrived on Thanksgiving Day and joined the Marines in a field mess for Thanksgiving dinner. Senator Margaret Chase Smith, a republican from Vermont, arrived on Saturday evening, December 1st.

Guantanamo had been quickly reinforced by both air and sealift "when the balloon went up." When the order was given to redeploy back to the United States, the withdrawal

of forces occurred almost as quickly. On November 28th the message was received from the Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Fleet to return BLT 2/1 to Camp Pendleton. It was relieved in place by 1/8 and staged at Ferry Landing to await the arrival of amphibious shipping. Its battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Geftman, was presented a letter of commendation for the outstanding performance of his unit by the commanding general of ground forces, Brigadier General Collins. By December 3rd all of of BLT 2/1 was aboard amphibious shipping and ready to proceed to the Panama Canal. The message from CINCLANTFLT directing the redeployment of BLT 2/2 and 1/8 and the Headquarters RLT-6 to the United States aboard PHIBRON 8 shipping and Marine aircraft was received on December 6th.

By December 12th all of the reinforcing battalions had redeployed by either air or sealift, and one of the most unique Marine Corps operations since World War II was over. It marked the first time since World War II that east and west coast Marines had manned lines side by side and the first Marine Corps operational deployment in which a triple combination of delivery means, MATS aircraft, Marine aircraft, and amphibious shipping, had been utilized to mass forces into a single combat area.

The following chapter contains more detail of the assembly of west coast Marines into an expeditionary brigade which sailed to the aid of their fellow Marines on the east coast.

CHAPTER IX

"GO EAST, MARINE"

The 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) was originally organized as a cadre unit designated to be activated only upon the execution of the first phases of the Cuban contingency plans. Tables of organization for the brigade headquarters and the headquarters company were approved on April 12, 1962. During the period of cadre status, the members of the 5th MEB staff familiarized themselves with the appropriate contingency plans. The commanding general, Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, was assigned responsibility for filling the required troop commitments for the 5th MEB upon activation. The major west coast commands maintained up to date rosters of personnel who were to be assigned to the 5th MEB upon activation.

Each of the units which would comprise the 5th MEB were well-trained and all had participated in many unit and battalion-sized exercises with some having participated in regimental level training.1

On October 19, 1962 the 1st Marine Division received a dispatch from the commanding general of Fleet Marine Forces in the Pacific forwarding a directive from the Joint Chiefs of Staff that a reinforced infantry battalion be chopped in place to the Commander in Chief of Atlantic Naval Forces.

1. Commanding General, Command Diary of the Fifth Marine Expeditionary Brigade 18 Oct-5 Nov 1962, on file at the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C. The majority of the chapter covering this time period was extracted from this source.

The monitor staff of the 5th MEB was alerted to the possible activation and future deployment of the brigade. As the 1st Marine Division carried out the mount out to provide the requested reinforced infantry battalion, the 5th MEB staff monitored the action for the purpose of determining the probable activation and deployment of their unit.

Shortly after the receipt of the JCS directive, the commanding general of the 5th MEB, Brigadier General W. T. Fairbourn, sent for the pre-assigned members of the brigade staff to assemble at Camp Pendleton for an orientation conference to further familiarize them with their staff assignments, the mission and task of the brigade, its status, and the probability of its activation. The next day the order was received directing the activation of the 5th MEB headquarters.

One of the battalions which had been committed to the 5th MEB was the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Marines (BLT 2/1) which was the unit chopped to CINCLANT. Since no directive was received specifying a replacement for BLT 2/1, General Fairbourn directed that plans proceed for activation and deployment of the brigade based on the assumption that a replacement would be assigned and the full complement of four battalions and combat service supports would be available to execute the Cuban contingency plans. Planning also assumed that the 5th MEB would depart from its point of embarkation with a full complement of allocated shipping.

By noon on October 22, 1962 virtually all of the

personnel assigned to the brigade headquarters and headquarters company had reported for duty. By this time the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet had directed the assembly of naval shipping which would be required to move the 5th MEB. All designated shipping was directed to proceed to the naval station at San Diego from which the brigade would embark.

The administrative effort to form the brigade was formidable. Each individual reporting Marine had to be identified, assigned, accounted for, paid, and fed. Additional medical personnel were obtained from the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery bringing the brigade to full strength. The brigade legal section sent contact teams to each of the battalions assigned to the brigade to prepare wills, powers of attorney, and other legal assistance for the deploying Marines. Interrogator/translator teams were assigned to each battalion and the regimental headquarters. The intelligence section unpacked, inventoried, and delivered to appropriate units a total of 247,000 maps necessary to meet the brigade's requirements.

The brigade was formally activated by message on October 23, 1962 which ordered that it was to be completely embarked within 96 hours. Additional planning and embarkation proceeded at an accelerated pace in order to meet the deadline. The 1st Battalion of the 7th Marines (1/7) was assigned to replace BLT 2/1. At the time of embarkation the brigade consisted of Regimental Landing Team-1 (RLT-1), the

1st Marine Regiment of the 1st Marine Division, and the 3rd Battalion of the 7th Marines (3/7). The reconstituted battalion, 1/7, was assigned to be the Landing Group East Reserve in brigade planning.

Late on October 23rd, the brigade was informed that the II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) was activated for planning and embarkation for Cuban contingency operations and that the task organization in II MEF's operations plans included the 5th MEB as Landing Group East.

By the following evening almost all of the classes of supplies had been transported to the point of embarkation with the exception of class V and V A stocks (certain types of ammunition). The request was made to expedite the delivery of these supplies and a 100 man working party was sent to assist in their loading. Nevertheless, because the supplies did not arrive on time, there were complications with the loading of the ships and the balancing of supplies in the embarked ships. Loading of amphibious shipping at the embarkation stage is critical, because, once it is loaded, very little can be shifted around while at sea. The last thing in is the first thing out, and this must be what would be needed in the first assault wave.

In spite of difficulties, the brigade and all of its assigned units were completely embarked on naval shipping and set sail under the temporary operational control of CINCLANT within the assigned 96 hour deadline. The brigade attempted to maintain secrecy by issuing no press releases and replying

to inquiries only that the forces were sailing on maneuvers.

In order to transport units of the brigade to the point of embarkation, 476 vehicles of all types were augmented to brigade use and drove an estimated 70,000 miles. They transported 6,211 personnel with their personal and combat equipment, 13,620 tons of bulk cargo and ammunition, and 158 pieces of special use and heavy equipment. The organic equipment of the brigade was transported from as far as the Marine Corps Base at Twenty-Nine Palms, California. The brigade's organic units traveled an estimated 49,500 miles towing their 155mm howitzers and carrying their basic load of 155mm howitzer ammunition. In the total of almost 120,000 miles driven, only one minor traffic accident occurred.

The first ship to commence loading the brigade was the U.S.S. Bayfield, an amphibious transport assigned to Amphibious Group (PHIBGRU) III. The command ship for the 5th MEB was the U.S.S. Eldorado. However, due to the ship's limited billeting space, many members of the brigade's headquarters were embarked on other ships which hampered staff coordination and supervision. Nevertheless, the morale of 5th MEB Marines, now officially assigned the designator Task Group 53.2, was excellent. Their estimated time of arrival at Balboa, Panama, the Pacific point of entry to the Panama Canal, was November 5, 1962.2

2. Commanding General, Command Diary of the Fifth Marine Expeditionary Brigade 5-30 November 1962, on file at the

As the task group proceeded south toward the Panama Canal, the Navy implemented security precautions usually associated only with wartime or other sailing requiring maximum alert. Anti-submarine warfare operations intensified, and at night the ships sailed at darken ship with radio security and a host of other security precautions undertaken. While in transit the 5th MEB staff continued to update its operations plans for the Cuban contingency. With the addition of the 5th MEB, a near simultaneous assault capability with two landing groups in eastern Cuba or at any of several other locations was possible. The staff also prepared to assume operational control of the aviation command element which was to be assigned as the task force neared the objective area.

As the task force closed upon the Panama Canal, international tensions related to the Cuban crisis began to subside. Many began to doubt whether the execution phase of the operation plans would ever take place. The command also had to contend with the additional possibility of long periods of deployment at sea in a ready status. The definite possibility existed that the required deployment might exceed sixty days and General Luckey requested an estimate of how long the 5th MEB could maintain its current maximum readiness posture and of the time required to regain this posture after

2. cont. Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Wash. D.C. The majority of the remainder of this chapter covering this time period was extracted from this source.

having to "stand down" for maintenance and training. General Fairbourn replied that the maximum state of readiness existing at the time of embarkation could be maintained for sixty days, provided that fifty percent of the command at a time be allowed to conduct training ashore on Vieques. Training ashore at Vieques was even more imperative because the brigade had never before trained together as a unit, and, because of the imposed radio silence, it was impossible to conduct communication checks of radio equipment.

The task force arrived in Balboa, Panama on the afternoon of November 5th and was dissolved in order to be reorganized. With some changes to the escort shipping, the remainder of the task group was reactivated the same afternoon as Task Group 44.9 and was chopped to the Naval Atlantic Command. The west coast Marines were soon to join their east coast counterparts in a rare joint operational deployment.

With the exception of the command ship, the U.S.S. Eldorado and the U.S.S. Iwo Jima, the newly designated task force began to immediately transit the canal. The Iwo Jima required special rigging for passing through the canal while the Eldorado docked on the Atlantic side.

While docked the 5th MEB took on the headquarters of four U.S. Army Civil Affairs platoons for operational control. While the shipping passed through the canal, the commanding general of the 5th MEB, the commander of Naval Amphibious Group III upon which the brigade was embarked, and

selected members of the their staffs departed for Norfolk to attend a conference planned by the Naval Commander of Atlantic Amphibious Forces. From there they went to General Luckey's headquarters for further briefings. They then went on to Guantanamo to receive another detailed briefing, including an orientation of port facilities, staging areas, logistical support areas, and assembly areas available in the event the 5th MEB was directed to reinforce the ground defense forces at Guantanamo. By the time these briefings were completed on November 9th, the Eldorado, along with the remainder of Task Group 44.9, had completed transit through the canal and was steaming northeast in the Caribbean. At the same time that General Fairbourn was picked up at Kingston, Jamaica, the command group of Landing Group East Aviation was also picked up and their control was chopped from the 2nd Marine Air Wing to the 5th MEB.

Orders were received that half of the amphibious forces were to be maintained in a ready status within 24 hours steaming distance of Guantanamo and the remainder of the task group was authorized to conduct landing exercises on Vieques Island. Instructions were also received to suspend all preparations to implement OPLAN 314-61 with the exception of those portions which were applicable to OPLAN 316-62. Also, as a result of the conference in Norfolk, detailed plans were undertaken for possible operations in the Mariel and Matanzas areas of Cuba, both east and west of Havana.

In order to facilitate periods of maintenance and

training as well as occasional liberty, the brigade was divided into an Alpha Unit and a Bravo Unit. Alpha Unit was designated Task Unit 129.2.1 and consisted of the RLT-1 headquarters, BLT 1/1 and BLT 1/7. The Bravo Unit was designated Task Unit 129.2.2 and consisted of the logistical support group, BLT 3/1, and BLT 3/7. Both were roughly equal in nature and little alteration of the loading or task organization was necessary to implement the contingency plans of either. Each infantry battalion was instructed to conduct a landing exercise at Vieques Island, although the heavy logistical support vehicles and landing force supplies were not to be landed.

During this period the troops were authorized to be paid aboard ship. A branch post office was established at Guantanamo with units at Roosevelt Roads and Camp Garcia to improve the widely dispersed postal delivery. The embarked Marines celebrated the 187th birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps on November 10th by cake cutting ceremonies held aboard all ships and, in most cases, special holiday meals were served. The brigade staff, however, continued to refine operational plans for the contingencies of Guantanamo defense and Mariel and Matanzas operations. Also on November 10th, General Luckey assigned the 5th MEB to be the reserve force of the II MEF, portions of which were already ashore at Guantanamo and afloat in other amphibious shipping in the Caribbean.

Shortly after noon on November 15th the command ship

docked at the naval base at San Juan, Puerto Rico, while Alpha Unit conducted its training ashore at Vieques. By November 20th the training ashore had been completed and Alpha Unit backloaded its amphibious shipping over the Vieques beaches and steamed off to assume its on-station position. Meanwhile the Bravo Unit had been on-station with 50% of its personnel in a ready-liberty status at Kingston, Jamaica.

Two days prior to Thanksgiving it was Bravo Unit's turn to commence the planning and execution of its training ashore at Vieques. The actual landings by Bravo Unit actually commenced at 0500 on November 24th. Helicopter landings followed at 1100 and by 1330 all personnel and equipment were ashore. Bravo Unit's training ashore included the direction by BLT 3/7 of naval gunfire exercises on Culebra Island on November 28th. Backloading of the Bravo group also commenced during this time.

Also on November 28th a message was received directing that the 5th MEB amphibious shipping consider taking BLT 2/1 aboard from Guantanamo for transit back to its home base in California and that further consideration be given to sending BLT 1/7 back to the west coast for further deployment to the western Pacific. This was the first indication received by 5th MEB received that plans were being made to return it to the west coast. The next day formal orders were received directing Naval Amphibious Group III to proceed to Guantanamo and to pick up as much personnel and equipment of BLT 2/1 as

it could hold, sail them to Panama, transit the canal, and return to the operational control of the Pacific fleet. The same message directed the rest of the group to return home in increments and directed VMA-121 to return to its home station and the operational control of the Pacific fleet. The remainder of BLT 2/1 that could not be boarded in amphibious shipping was to be returned by air to Camp Pendleton but, as it turned out, this was unnecessary, as all were able to be accomodated aboard available shipping.

Finally on November 30th the word was passed that the 5th MEB would be returned to its home base with the Pacific forces. During the night, the U.S.S. Okanogan, U.S.S. Bexar, and the U.S.S. Union arrived in Guantanamo, but, because it was so late, they waited until the next day to begin loading troops for transportation back to the Pacific. During the Cuban contingency two officers and 53 enlisted were lost to the brigade because of emergency leave and hospitalization, and one Marine was lost overboard and subsequently declared dead. As the amphibious shipping steamed away from Guantanamo, the operational control of the 5th MEB over Landing Group East aviation was terminiated and the commanding officer of HMM-361 was directed to assume the remaining responsibilities of Landing Group East aviation.

By the end of November, the west coast Marines of the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade were well on their way to return to Camp Pendleton, California. In only four short days they had organized from "scratch" into a cohesive

fighting unit and had embarked their necessary personnel, equipment, and supplies aboard ship and were prepared to conduct amphibious combat operations in the Cuban Missile Crisis that their country needed for its defense.

CHAPTER X

"AVIATION"

The fundamental characteristic that makes the United States Marine Corps unique from other military services of the United States is its mission and training to project our naval power ashore. Organization, training, and doctrine concentrate upon the ability to launch combat units and equipment from naval shipping to shore. The success of any amphibious operation depends upon the ability of the assaulting force to gain and maintain air superiority because of its vulnerability during the assault stage. The success of Marine Corps amphibious doctrine is largely due to the incorporation of aviation assets into the Marine Corps' organizational structure. Aircraft capable of ground attack, aerial strike, defense, and vertical assault are organic to the Marine Corps. Additionally, having its own air arm not only enhances the Marine Corps' readiness and flexibility in responding to contingencies, but also enhances the comraderie among Marines on the ground and those in the air supporting them.

The Marine Corps aviation assets are organized into squadrons, groups, and wings. A squadron is roughly equivalent in size and deployability to an infantry battalion. It is generally the smallest size aviation unit capable of self-sustaining independent deployment. Contained within every squadron is the maintenance and repair capability to sustain air operations. If more than one

squadron is deployed, a coordinating command similar to an infantry regimental staff is also deployed, known as a group. In addition to the aircraft squadrons, a group typically contains intermediate maintenance facilities and air traffic control capabilities. All aviation assets are organized into three active service wings, roughly equivalent to infantry divisions, and one reserve wing. The squadrons, groups, and wings are designed for task organizing into expeditionary forces since most Marine Corps operations consist of either amphibious assaults or ground operations ashore. Because the Marine Corps mission is the projection of naval force ashore, even the aviation assets in a task force are placed under the overall command of a ground commander who in turn is subject to the command of a naval officer.

The month of October 1962 found much of the Marine Corps aviation assets engaged in routine peacetime deployments. Marine Air Group (MAG) 26 was deployed with the 4th MEB as the air support for the PHIBRIGLEX-62 exercises off Vieques Island in Puerto Rico. Medium lift helicopter squadrons HMM-264 and HMM-261 were deployed with the group along with detachments from fixed wing observation squadron VMO-1 and heavy lift helicopter squadron HMH-461. These elements were deployed aboard the U.S.S. Okinawa and the U.S.S.Thetis Bay, amphibious assault ships capable of landing aircraft on their decks. Fixed wing ground attack squadron VMA-331 and fixed wing fighter squadron VMF-333 were deployed at

Roosevelt Roads in Puerto Rico. Other Marine Corps aviation units which would take part in the Cuban Missile Crisis were deployed at their home bases on either the east or the west coasts.1

On the first of October the Commander in Chief of Atlantic Forces of the United States Navy directed that by October 20th all feasible means be taken to insure maximum readiness to execute CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62 providing for air operations to strike selected Cuban targets on short notice. Prepositioning of ordnance and aviation support equipment was authorized and undertaken. Three days later the order was issued for six F8U aircraft to be deployed to the naval air station at Key West on October 19th. This assignment was to be rotated between the CG of FMFLANT and the commander of naval air forces in the Atlantic on a monthly basis. MAG-26 had only recently returned to its home base at New River, North Carolina on October 11th after operations in Tennessee with army troops in support of the suppression of a civil disorder.

When deployments in support of actual Cuban operations began on the 18th and 19th of October, it became apparent that adequate air basing facilities were not within range of

1. The primary source for this chapter is Commanding General, Command Diary of Headquarters, FMFLANT and II MEF, 1962 with some portions from the CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis. Both are available at the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C.

the Cuban theatre to provide the effective air support and strike capability that would be needed to perform OPLAN 312-62 operations. It had always been assumed in the planning for those operations that the airfield on the tiny island of Mayaguana would be available for American use, but unfortunately, its use was denied at the time of the crisis. Negotiations were in progress to be allowed to use Jamaican airfields, but these also were not made available. Basing all available aircraft at Guantanamo itself was an unacceptable risk. Finally, at the request of CINCLANTFLT, the Dominican Republic allowed United States forces to utilize San Isidro Airfield as a staging base in the furtherance of inter-American relations. The disadvantage was that this airfield was over 350 miles from Guantanamo and, for aircraft to have sufficient time on station for operational missions, it was necessary to refuel them with KC-130F (GV-1) refuelers. Air operations could have been conducted from the aircraft carriers U.S.S. Lexington and U.S.S. Saratoga only after they completed an accelerated overhaul, and the rigid alert requirements of the Cuban Missile Crisis precluded the time required to prepare squadrons for carrier duty. Two aircraft carriers, the U.S.S. Independence and the U.S.S. Enterprise, were, however, made available to support the defense of Guantanamo. It was finally decided to deploy four attack squadrons upon the available carriers.

On October 20th it was also decided that one Marine air

group consisting of one fighter and three attack squadrons would be assigned to CINCAFLANT for planning and one would be deployed to Key West assigned to CINCAFLANT. One MAG consisting of two attack and one fighter squadrons currently stationed at Roosevelt Roads would be chopped in place to Task Force 135. Also on the 20th, the Commanding General of FMFLANT requested that two attack squadrons from the Pacific forces be chopped in place to FMFLANT.

The next day on October 21st, a detachment of Marine reconnaissance aircraft were deployed to participate in reconnaissance missions over Cuba. The diversion of Marine reconnaissance assets to missions other than amphibious landing and Guantanamo defense reconnaissance would later become a source of friction and exasperation for the planners of amphibious landings because of their inability to obtain adequate beach intelligence with which to plan their landings and for the Guantanamo defense forces because of their limited ability to "see" beyond base boundaries. Also on the 21st, VMA-225 flew aboard the carrier U.S.S. Enterprise from MCAS Cherry Point where it remained until December 5th.

On October 22nd MAG-14 arrived at Key West to serve under the command of Naval Air Atlantic Forces. The headquarters of MAG-32 was also directed to deploy to Roosevelt Roads to assume operational control of VMA-331, VMF-333, and the detachments of reconnaissance aircraft which had been assigned to 4th MEB. All of these forces were then

chopped to Naval Task Force 135.

When MAG-14 reported to CINCAFLANT on October 23rd, it had with it a detachment from its Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron (H&MS), a detachment from MABS (Marine Air Base Squadron), VMA-324, VMA-533, VMA-242, VMF-122, and a detachment from VMCJ-2 (reconnaissance aircraft). The deployment of MAG-14 to Key West included VMF(AW)-122, an all-weather fighter squadron, VMA-242, VMA-324, VMA-553, and a detachment of VMCJ-2. By the 24th it was completely in place and ready for air operations in western Cuba under the direction of CINCAFLANT. The deployment was supported by MATS aircraft in 36 sorties of 9 C-135, 14 C-133, and 13 C-124 flights. Second MAW aircraft also supported the deployment with 7 C-147, 1 C-54C and 5 C-119F sorties. By the time they had reached Key West, 1,345 personnel and 1,710,278 pounds of cargo had been airlifted.

By October 24th MAG-32 was in position at two locations in two separate elements. Part of the headquarters was assigned to Guantanamo under the operational control of Task Force 135 and assumed control over all FMFLANT air augmentation units. Another section of MAG-32's headquarters deployed to Roosevelt Roads and assumed control of all MAG-32 elements there. Also on that day Atlantic Fleet air assets were beefed up by the addition of VMA-121 and VMA-223 from the 3rd Marine Air Wing. They were placed on 36 hour notice to deploy to the east coast or Caribbean bases. VMA-121 was

later on November 14th deployed to the naval air station at Cecil Field, Florida to replace a Navy CAG (CVG-10 unit) there. Ten KC-130F's from VMGR-352 supported this deployment.

By October 27th the commander of Naval Task Force 135 was so concerned about the air defense of Guantanamo that he recommended the redeployment of the entire VMA-333 squadron from Roosevelt Roads to Guantanamo. The CG of FMFLANT objected, fearing that the aircraft on the ground would be too vulnerable, considering they would be in unreveted and unprotected positions at the base. It was finally decided that eight fighters and four attack aircraft would be redeployed from VMF-333 and VMA-331 to Guantanamo.

The stand-down phase began on November 29th, the day after the Commander in Chief of the Atlantic fleet set DEFCON 5 in the Atlantic for all forces except those at Key West, Guantanamo, and Naval Task Force 135. VMA-121, MAG-14 and the detachment from VMF-235 were the first aviation units to receive their orders to return to their home bases. VMF-122 replaced the detachment from VMF-235 as the sixth plane commitment at Key West. On December 4th VMF-115 deployed to Guantanamo to relieve VMF-333 and on the following day CINCLANTFLT set DEFCON 5 for all Atlantic Fleet Forces even in the Key West area. The following day amphibious shipping picked up the remainer of MAG-32 deployed at Guantanamo, except for VMF-115, to return them to their home stations by December 15th.

By the end of the stand-down phase on December 15th, the only FMFLANT or II MEF contingency deployments remaining were portions of MAG-14 and MAG-32 which had been placed on 48 hour reaction for portions of OPLAN 312.

Much of the air strategy, tactics, and operations pertaining to the Cuban Missile Crisis remains classified. It is known, however, that MAG-14 devised approach and attack tactics against the Cuban surface to air missile sites which reduced the exposure time to their radars to less than six seconds. Their A4D Skyhawks were to run in at a minimum altitude to a known initial point where a pop-up maneuver was to be executed at high G's to an altitude of about 5,000 feet, execute a half roll, and pull through in the inverted position where the pilot visually sighted the target. He would then roll out and glide bomb run onto the SAM site.

The massive air deployments of the Cuban Missile Crisis were all completed in less than the time assigned to them. The units involved and their assigned Marines could certainly look back with pride that they were ready to move out when their ground counterparts needed their support.

CHAPTER XI

"STAFF PLANNING"

The famed "Desert Fox", Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, once said that quartermasters determine the outcome of wars before they start. That assessment was accurate, at least in his north African campaign in 1942, for it was certainly not superior tactics of his adversaries that drove his Afrika Korps from the sands of the Sahara. In October of 1962 there was no war with which to test the "skill" of the opposing quartermasters. However, the American response to the Cuban Missile Crisis was massive and so was the logistics and staff planning and functioning required to support that response.

What are now recognized staff functions were performed by generals' personal staffs at the beginning of the development of modern armies. But as modern armies evolved, staff functions and responsibilities became more formalized, many of them modeling the Prussian models which had proven to be so efficient in two world wars and in other smaller scale conflicts. Since World War II, general staffs have been assigned to every division, and the functions have been designated "G-1" for administration, "G-2" for intelligence, "G-3" for operations, and "G-4" for supply and combat service support. At the battalion level the same functions exist on a smaller scale, and are designated executive-staff with the abbreviations of "S-1", etc. Space limitations permit only a

brief summary of the highlights of each of the levels of staff functioning of the units participating in the Cuban Missile Crisis.1

G-1 Administration

At the beginning of the period of the Cuban contingency, on October 1, 1962 II MEF totaled over 38,000 enlisted personnel, including over 1,100 United States Navy personnel. It was led by over 2,800 Marine officers and over 200 naval officers. In order to insure the minimum turnover in personnel and to stabilize the units which would be involved in the operations, the Commandant of the Marine Corps on October 24th issued an order providing for the involuntary extension of active duty personnel and also authorized the cancellation upon request of major unit commanders of all permanent change of station orders issued to personnel in FMFLANT. These quick actions assisted in filling critical personnel shortages in order to attain the maximum possible personnel readiness under the circumstances.

1. Command Diary of the Headquarters FMFLANT and II MEF. The bulk of the detail of staff functioning contained in this chapter is summarized from the staff reports in this document.

CINCLANT OPLAN 314-61 which was initially in the planning stages provided for civil affairs support from the 41st Civil Affairs Company of the United States Army stationed Fort Gordon, Georgia to support the II MEF. At the beginning of the period, that company had an on board strength of 35 officers and 83 enlisted of which 13 officers and 24 enlisted were embarked with the 4th MEB participating in PHIBRIBLEX 62. When the "balloon went up," the Marines wanted to retain the Civil Affairs personnel, but their corps commander insisted that they be returned to his command. An exchange of messages resulted in a captain being assigned to the Marine headquarters as liaison officer. The incident was a pre-cursor to the problems which have recently been associated with joint service operations such as the Grenadan rescue mission and the Iranian hostage mission of recent years.2

G-2 Intelligence

One of the biggest problems plaguing the Marines during the Cuban Missile Crises was the lack of adequate intelligence with which to plan their operations. Intelligence gathering at Guantanamo was hampered by the inadequate number of trained intelligence personnel upon the staff, restriction on over-flights in the vicinity of the base, and the prohibition of ground reconnaissance beyond the

2. Gabriel, Richard A., Military Incompetence: Why the American Military Doesn't Win, Hill and Wang, New York, 1985, pp. 85-116, 149-86

base perimeter. Because the Guantanamo intelligence staff was so small, intelligence specialists from the augmented battalion landing teams were assigned to the intelligence section of the Marine barracks headquarters. Some information was obtained by the counter-intelligence and interrogation/translation teams in debriefing informants and defectors and in translating Spanish documents. They also employed tactical air observers for perimeter aerial reconnaissance and received intelligence reports from FMFLANT.

The II MEF also had difficulty obtaining its requested aerial photography. It urgently needed aerial photographs of Tarara Beach and other areas at which either amphibious landings or aerial inserts were planned. Of the meager amount of aerial photography provided, most was of such poor quality that detailed interpretation was precluded. It was not until November 10th, for example, that the first large-scale vertical Tarara Beach photography was received that was considered adequate to perform detailed interpretation. The reason for the unsatisfactory aerial photo support was the higher priority assigned to the squadrons capable of providing this support to fly other missions, probably of the missile sites and other military installations and targets. Overall, however, the other intelligence support provided by higher commands was excellent.

Most electronic warfare planning was performed by Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron-2 (VMCJ-2). In October

1962 it had assigned to it six EF-10B (formerly F3D-2Q) aircraft. The unit began planning for electronic intelligence missions to be flown against Cuba in July of 1960. Almost immediately the possibility of Soviet equipment in Cuba became apparent, and by September of 1960 the program was as much operational as it was training. By October of 1960 the unit was flying an average of 12 missions a month and was the principal agency involved in establishing, developing, and maintaining the radar order of battle in Cuba. Five Marine pilots of VCMJ-2 were awarded the distinguished flying cross for their actions during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

G-3 Operations

Because most of the operational planning in support of the Cuban Missle Crisis has been covered in previous chapters, this section will be limited to special problems of the operational section, particularly in the area of fire support.

One of the major weaknesses in the Guantanamo defense posture was the amount of fire support available compared with the Cuban artillery in the vicinity. At the start of the period only two 155mm self-propelled guns, six 155mm howitzers, and four 105mm howitzers were positioned at Guantanamo. Four destroyers were available for naval gunfire support, and two additional destroyers were in Guantanamo undergoing training. All nuclear, biological, and chemical

warfare capability was in the continental United States. At the peak of FMFLANT's deployments, in the Guantanamo Bay area the government of Cuba had forty-three field artillery pieces with the following ranges:

122mm howitzer M-1938 (Bloc)	12,904 yds
122mm gun M-1931/1937 (Bloc)	24,000 yds
152mm gun-howitzer M-1937 (Bloc)	18,880 yds
37mm gun M-6 (US)	
57mm anti-tank gun M-1943 (Bloc)	5,486 yds
130mm field gun	30,000 yds
Assault gun, SU-100 (Bloc)	15,316 yds
Frog	40-50,000 yds
Snapper	2,675 yds

(The breakdown of types was not known.)

After augmentation the United States had available to it the following artillery pieces:

155mm gun (self-propelled)	25,700 yds
155mm howitzers	16,350 yds
105mm howitzers	12,330 yds
4.2mm mortars	6,500 yds

Not only were United States forces outgunned, but the Cubans had the added opportunity to deploy their artillery over a much more widely dispersed area and to move into new positions under the cover of darkness, whereas U.S. artillery positions were few and relatively immobile. But by October 25th naval gunfire had been augmented to include two heavy cruisers and fourteen destroyers of various classes in the immediate area. The range of the five inch guns of the destroyers were 25,900 yards and that of the three inch guns was 13,000 yards. The eight inch guns of the heavy crusiers could "reach out and touch someone" at 31,000 yards (almost 6 miles) away. Even this range, however, would not have been sufficient to reach targets from the sea north of the naval

station's boundary unless the crusiers were actually in the restricted area of the bay. The western landing group had one heavy cruiser and five destroyers to provide naval gunfire and the eastern landing group had one heavy cruiser and three destroyers.

Much of the naval gunfire support that would otherwise have been available to Guantanamo was given instead to support the planned Tarara Beach landings. There the 10th Marines, reinforced by the 2nd Field Artillery Group had one 155mm self-propelled gun battery and one eight inch howitzer battery with four guns each. On the day after D-day, it was planned that two U.S. Army 105mm howitzer batteries and two 155mm howitzer batteries would have landed and temporarily reinforced Marine artillery.

The 5th MEB requested assignment of heavy artillery to support it, but all general support artillery was attached to the 2nd Marine Division. If the 5th MEB had been committed to an objective other than Tarara or Guantanamo, cruiser gunfire support and artillery support could have been provided only at the expense of support in the Tarara area.

A serious deficiency therefore existed in heavy artillery support for Marine ground and amphibious forces. Even if air strikes could have destroyed many artillery targets in the Guantanamo area, much of the surviving artillery could probably have out-ranged our own artillery. In order to adequately have prevented artillery attacks upon Guantanamo, it would have been necessary to occupy and/or

control a beachhead out to approximately 24,000 yards (around 4 1/2 miles). Naval gunfire support during the first four days of the execution of OPLAN 312 would probably have been adequate, but then the cruiser support would have been shifted to the Havana area, leaving none for Guantanamo. It would therefore have been necessary to secure this radius by that time, or the base would have been subject to artillery attacks which could have been suppressed only by air.

The II MEF was ordered to be prepared to utilize nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons only when directed by higher authority. Nuclear munitions were carried aboard fleet shipping for both aircraft and ground delivery, but biological and chemical agents and munitions were not prepositioned or carried aboard fleet shipping during the crisis, except for smoke, incendiaries, and riot control agents.

Much of the specific special warfare operations planning remains classified. Generally, however, the mission of these units was to organize guerilla warfare in the key terrain areas of Cuba to cut enemy communication lines, especially at night when the effect of our air superiority would decrease. This would also have required the enemy to divert troops to contain the guerilla forces at the expense of defending against the attacking regular invading forces.

FMFLANT normally has no units designed for conducting psychological warfare through such means as radio transmission, airborne leaflet distribution, loud speaker

teams and artillery-distributed leaflets. The only possibilities considered by the Marines during the crisis were the latter two, and even this capability was not achieved prior to the stand-down phase.

The commander of the amphibious task force did devise a plan to conduct deception operations in the event of actual amphibious landings. A beach jumper unit was planned to conduct a deception at Veradero approximately 70 miles east of Havanna. After the 5th MEB arrived in the Caribbean, it was proposed that it conduct a feint at Veradero and that the beach jumper unit conduct deception operations in the Cienfuegos/Trinidad area. However, neither of the two plans had been approved by the time of the stand down.

G-4 Supply and Combat Service Support

Had Rommel's "battle of quartermasters" occurred, the Marines' logisticians and their naval support would have been hard to beat. By October 31st over 25,000 Marines were enroute to the objective area with supplies and equipment adequate for at least fifteen days of sustained combat. About 4,500 personnel were stationed at Guantanamo with thirty days of combat supplies either positioned at or enroute to the base. Enough ammunition had been positioned at the air bases which would have supported the Cuban contingency operation, primarily at Key West, Roosevelt Roads, Guantanamo, and naval support shipping, to support 1,800 sorties each of fixed-wing fighter and attack aircraft.

All necessary supplies for both aviation and ground units were either being moved to the east coast or were held in a state of readiness for shipment. MSTS shipping was programmed and confirmed. Emergency air delivery capability at Key West for support of the landing groups was essentially complete. The Marines were transported aboard thirty-seven assault ships organized into one amphibious group (PHIBGRU) for the 5th MEB and five amphibious squadrons (PHIBRON).

The combat service support provided by the Navy to the Marines during the crisis was exceptional. In addition to the Marine combat engineers augmented into II MEF, naval construction forces also became a part of II MEF for the deployment. The Navy also provided two surgical teams for the support of landing group west, one for the support of landing group east, and positioned 325 units of whole blood on amphibious shipping which was based upon casualty estimates for the period of D-day to D+10. Additionally 69 medical officers and 1,000 Navy corpsmen were assigned to FMFLANT at the start of the period on October 1962.

As might be expected in an operation of this magnitude the communication and message distribution center was stretched to its capacity. There were so many classified messages, including top secret ones which required special handling, that internal processing of them became a serious problem. The communications center traffic load of FMFLANT normally averaged approximately 150 messages a day. During the 61 day period of the Cuban Missile Crisis from October

1st through December 15th, a total of 24,304 messages were processed, of which 15,089 were classified. This was an average of almost 400 messages a day, over 2 1/2 times the normal traffic load.

In Rommel's day it might have been the quartermasters who decided the wars. In Gramm and Rudman's day it would certainly be the comptrollers. In President Kennedy's day it was probably a happy medium between the two. It was a mistake for the missiles to have been placed in Cuba in the first place. But it was certainly equally poor planning for Castro and Khrushchev to have let the "balloon go up" at the beginning of the United States government's fiscal year when the military's comptrollers' coffers were full. Initially the crisis was financed by deferring many plans not associated with the crisis and by reprogramming to meet the emergency requirements. The initial funding was therefore accomplished with moneys on hand. By December 15th the accumulated unprogrammed costs for the Marines were $1,333,116.00 and future costs were estimated to be $331,016.00. At least as far as wars go, the Cuban Missile Crisis was "fought" "on the cheap."

But, regardless of the cost, did the massive effort of U.S. forces to quarantine Cuba and prepare for an invasion of the Soviets' communist satellite make a difference to Soviet leaders? The next chapter analyzes what effects the preparations for an invasion by the American military had on the decisions made by Soviet leaders during the crisis.

CHAPTER XII

"SOVIET ANALYSIS OF THE CARIBBEAN CRISIS"

Why did the Soviets decide to challenge the United States in an area so close to its borders and in a country where American influence had been predominant for over half a century? Why did the Soviets decide to make that challenge so deadly by using nuclear force? Did the Soviets intend to push the world to the brink of nuclear war? And why, when they themselves were challenged, did the Soviets so readily accede to American demands?

These questions and hundreds of others about Soviet intentions and motivations during the crisis may never be known. In a country which stifles rather than encourages public thought and discussion, it is difficult to probe the minds of the national decision makers.1 And in a country which perpetually preserves the secrets of its historical archives, it is even more difficult to analyze the internal machinery of its government.

There are, however, some Soviet sources from which some light can be shed upon the dual mystery of what and why the Soviets did what they did. There is also some incongruence between what they did and what they said they did to both the Soviet public and to the high echelons of the Soviet

1. An excellent analysis of the governmental decision-making process, although it cannot be considered a source, is Allison, Graham T., Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, Little, Brown, and Company, Boston 1971

government. The sources, though limited, are diverse. Although the crisis was of earth-shaking proportions in the West, particularly the United States, it received relatively scant coverage in the Soviet press. After the crisis Khrushchev addressed the Supreme Soviet, attempting to construe success from his withdrawal. After his fall, he wrote his memoirs, rambling about his actions, but offering little critical analysis. One official Soviet study of the crisis has been authorized, and there is sporadic coverage of the crisis by dissidents and defectors. Even a cursory study of the crisis, however, leaves the reader with a sense of pessimism of the prospects of our two countries' ever satisfactorily understanding each other.

The Soviets preferred referring to the Cuban Missile Crisis as the "Caribbean Crisis" in what Soviet literature there is on the subject, probably to remove any connotation that their missiles had anything to do with precipitating the crisis. They have two principal commentators upon the crisis, both of whom are hardly likely to be objective. Shortly after the crisis on December 12, 1962, Nikita Khrushchev addressed the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet on the Cuban Missile Crisis 2 and later commented upon it in what is generally accepted as his authentic memoirs.3 The son of

2. The full context of the speech with commentary is contained in Pope, Ronald R., ed., Soviet Views on the Cuban Missile Crisis: Myth and Reality in Foreign Policy Analysis, University Press of America, New York, 1982 at pp. 71-107

3. Talbott, Strobe, ed., Khrushchev Remembers, Little, Brown, and Company, Boston, 1970, pp. 488-505

Andrei Gromyko, the long-time Soviet foreign minister, who served in that capacity during the Cuban Missile Crisis, is Anatolii Gromyko, who has himself served as the head of the section for general trends in U.S. foreign policy at the Academy of Science Institute for the United States of America and Canada in Moscow. Both considered themselves to be good Marxist-Leninists, who cannot admit upon behalf of themselves or their fellow Soviet leaders to any major miscalculations. Khrushchev in his analysis, however, does make it relatively clear that the Soviet Union made important concessions to end the crisis, a fact which virtually escapes attention by the younger Gromyko.

In Khrushchev's Supreme Soviet speech which the Soviet editors state was punctuated with "prolonged applause," "stormy applause," and "stirs in the hall," and which was bristling with anti-American rhetoric, he proclaimed that "at the request of the Cuban government we shipped arms there," and "our purpose was only the defense of Cuba." He claimed that the Soviets thought that if the [American imperialists] "really dared to invade, would feel that the war they threatened was on their own borders, so that they would have a more real awareness of the danger of thermo-nuclear war to themselves."4

Khrushchev went on to state to his comrades that on the morning of October 27, 1962, intelligence information from

4. Pope, ed.Soviet Views on the Cuban Missile Crisis, pp 81-3

Cuba and elsewhere indicated that an attack against Cuba would be carried out within the next two or three days. It was only the Soviet government's prompt and immediate action which extinguished the "wick of war that had already begun to smolder" by offering to remove the weapons which the United States called offensive if the United States pledged not to invade Cuba and to restrain its other allies from doing so. Michael Tatu speculates that many in the Kremlin did not really believe the Americans would actually invade Cuba, but it is true that the issue of an invasion was the catalyst for some conciliatory action by the Soviets.5 President Kennedy publicly accepted the Soviet government's conditions and, since the weapons were sent to Cuba to prevent an attack upon her, there was no longer any necessity for them to remain, and they were withdrawn. The United States, for its part, on November 21st lifted the naval blockade of Cuba, recalled its warships, withdrew the force concentration in the Florida area, demobilized its called-up reserves, and withdrew the additional troops sent to Guantanamo.

It is common for governments to blame others for problems in international relations, but Soviet leaders have a tendency to carry this to an extreme. Khrushchev did admit, however, that "both sides made concessions" and that the side of "reason won, that the cause of peace in and that

5. Tatu, Michel, Power in the Kremlin: from Khrushchev to Kosygin, The Viking Press, New York, 1969, pp. 265-75

the security of nations won."6 He accused his critics in Albania who had called the solution a retreat of "acting like those silly boys." Although he claimed that history did show instances of America's violating its treaties, he defended his actions by arguing that if one proceeded on this basis alone, the only prospect for resolution of a crisis was mutual destruction. He even commended our government by stating that "in the decisive moment of crisis the U.S. government displayed prudence."7

Despite all the stormy and prolonged applause that his speech supposedly received, less than two years later on October 16, 1964, Pravda briefly announced that Khrushchev at his own request had been relieved of all his party and government duties because of his advanced age and poor health. In fact he had been ousted from power while on a working vacation at his government dacha on the Black Sea. His policy failures and hair-brained schemes had finally caught up with him and he was forced out of power. With this action Khrushchev became the first Soviet leader not to die in office. Surprisingly, however, in his retirement he was allowed to prepare and later publish his memoirs under the title of Khrushchev Remembers. Khrushchev was more candid, if not contradictory, in his memoirs. He admitted that it was during a trip to Bulgaria that he formulated the idea of

6. Pope, ed., Soviet Views on the Cuban Missile Crisis, pp. 90-1

7. Ibid., pp. 104-5

installing nuclear missiles in Cuba without letting the United States find out they were there until it was too late to do anything about them. Not only would this be a deterrent to American interference in the Caribbean, but it would equalize the balance of power and counter the American missiles aimed against them in Turkey, Italy, and West Germany. He claimed that by putting the ballistic missiles in Cuba he had no desire to start a war and that, on the contrary, his principal aim was only to deter America from starting a war.8

Khrushchev acknowledged that Castro was angry that the Soviets had removed the missiles and admitted that Soviet relations with Cuba deteriorated so much that Castro even stopped receiving the Soviet ambassador. The veteran Soviet diplomat who had originally established Soviet relations with Cuba, A. I. Mikoyan, was sent to Cuba to smooth over the problems. Khrushchev seemed to be proud that his compromise over Cuba had indeed secured Cuba's stability even though Castro might not have realized it. After Kennedy's death the Cuban compromise was honored by his successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson, who reaffirmed Kennedy's promise not to invade Cuba. Incidentally, Khrushchev asserted that the order to open fire on the U-2 reconnaissance plane in which Major Rudolph Anderson, Jr. was killed on October 27, 1962 was given by Cuba.9

8. Talbott, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 495

9. Ibid., p. 499

The principal Soviet academic commentator upon the Cuban Missile Crisis is Anatolii Gromyko, born in 1932 while his father, Andrei Gromyko, was attending the Lenin Agriculture Institute in Minsk.10 At the age of seven he moved to Washington, D.C. when his father was appointed counselor at the Soviet embassy. Later his father became Soviet ambassador to the United States (1943-6) and permanent Soviet representative in the U.N. Security Council (1946-8). During his youthful years in Washington, he attended a school for the children of Soviet diplomats where he learned English but which would have kept him partially insulated from American society. During the early 1950's Anatolii Gromyko attended the Soviet Foreign Ministry's prestigious Institute of International Relations and received the rough equivalent of an American PhD. Shortly after his father became the Soviet Foreign Minister in 1957, he was appointed the first Secretary at the Soviet Embassy in London. He has served in various other prominent positions and in December 1976 was appointed director of the Academy of Sciences African Institute in Moscow. In April 1973 the senior Gromyko became a full member of the Politiburo.

Except for Pravda and Izvestia accounts at the time, very little has been written in the Soviet Union since the Cuban Missile Crisis by any Soviet academician except Anatolii Gromyko. His work contains information which has

10. Portraits of Prominent U.S.S.R. Personalities, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, N.J. 1971, pp. 157-8

led observers to speculate that he had access to the Soviet archives in preparing his works. The most definitive and detailed discussion of the crisis by Gromyko was originally printed in a two-part article in Voprosy Istorii reprinted in Soviet Views on the Cuban Missile Crisis: Myth and Reality in Foreign Policy Analysis.11 This article is the only reference on the entry "Cuban Crisis (1962)" contained in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia.12 His bias in this and the other references which will be discussed is apparent not only from his relation to his prominent father but also in such subtleties as his complete failure to mention the name of Khrushchev and in his quotation to Robert Kennedy's book Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis by omitting the word "missile" from the cited title referenced. Another glaring omission is his continued failure to analyze the question of the presence of the Soviet missiles in Cuba which was at least one cause of the confrontation with the United States.

In Part One of his essay upon the United States government's "preparation" of the Caribbean Crisis, Gromyko lays the blame for the crisis at the foot of the Kennedy administration in preparing to attack Cuba. His premise is based upon President Kennedy's request on September 7, 1962

11. Pope, ed., Soviet Views on the Cuban Missile Crisis, pp. 161-226

12. Great Soviet Encyclopedia, MacMillian, Inc. New York, Vol. 11, 1976, pp. 237-8. See also entries under "Naval Blockade" at Volume 3, pp. 726-7 and "United States of America" at Volume 24, p. 654.

to Congress for authorization to call up 150,000 reservists, for the U-2 overflights of Cuban territory violating its sovereignty, the Caribbean military exercises utilized to camouflage the movement of 40,000 Marines in the close proximity of Guantanamo, the concentration of 100,000 U.S. forces in Florida, and the alert of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. These actions did in fact occur, but most were after the Soviet decision to send missiles to Cuba had been taken.

In Part Two of his article analyzing the diplomatic efforts of the U.S.S.R. to end the crisis, he predictably takes credit for the Soviet Union in resolving the crisis. He does give some credit, however, to President Kennedy in standing up to the powerful pressures placed upon him by the United States military to invade Cuba. He also lauds the Cuban government's efforts to seek peaceful paths for settling the Caribbean Crisis, although he is somewhat vague as to what concrete actions Cuba took to assist in the resolution of the crisis. In actuality, as stated previously, Cuba's intransigence almost derailed the peaceful settlement which was worked out by President Kennedy and Khrushchev. The general conclusion of Gromyko's article is that the Soviet Union assisted Cuba for purely moral reasons to resist United States aggression. He refuses to accept even partial responsibility on behalf of his country for the crisis. For all practical purposes Gromyko's version currently is the only point of view available to most

Soviets, especially students, because of the tendency of Soviet educators to present only a single point of view on controversial issues.13 They believe that to do otherwise would only confuse their young people.

The younger Gromyko is also the author of two other works worthy of note. In 1973 he published a history of the Kennedy administration, Through Russian Eyes:President Kennedy's 1036 Days.14 In it he reiterated his previous contention that the U.S.S.R. and Cuba were guided exclusively by peaceful aims in agreeing to deliver Soviet medium range missiles to Cuba for "defensive" purposes only when the danger of renewed American aggression against Cuba had sharply escalated. Again citing the U.S. military preparations in response to the discovery of the missiles, he states that the concoction of the concept of the missiles as being "offensive" was only a convenient American pretext to place its entire war machine in motion. Once the United States unleashed the genie from the bottle of nuclear confrontation, it was put back only with the peaceful proposals advanced by the Soviet government. Thus, Moscow offered Washington peace instead of thermo-nuclear war. Again, the principal distortions are that the missiles were stationed to address the imbalance of power and the United

13. Pope, ed. Soviet Views on the Cuban Missile Crisis, pp. 240-1

14. Gromyko, Anatoli Andreievich, Through Russian Eyes: President Kennedy's 1036 Days, International Library Inc., Washington, D.C., 1973, pp. 168-81

States military preparations were undertaken in response to the discovery of the missiles rather than vice versa.

A third work by the younger Gromyko is even more misleading. In two pages devoted to the crisis in the History of Soviet Foreign Policy (1945-1970), he makes no mention whatsoever of missiles.15 Again he states that, in response to the threat of invasion hanging over Cuba by American land forces after the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion, in the summer of 1962, Cuba requested additional assistance from the Soviet Union and agreement was quickly reached to strengthen Cuba's defense capabilities. Again he claims that the crisis "was resolved thanks to the Soviet government's firm and flexible stand, the determination of the Cuban people to defend their country's independence, and the support that the just cause received from the Warsaw Treaty states." The word "missile" never once appears in the passage.

The prominent Soviet dissidents, Roy and Zhores Medvedev, in their study Khrushchev: The Years in Power, give the crisis only very brief mention.16 Even though Khrushchev had actually capitulated to President Kennedy, they state he nevertheless received full approval as the peacemaker for the Cuban missile confrontation in 1962.

15. Gromyko A., ed., History of Soviet Foreign Policy (1945-1970) , Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, pp. 422-3

16 Medvedev, Roy A. and Zhores A., Khrushchev: The Years in Power, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1978, p. 84

The highest ranking Soviet offical to ever defect to the United States, Arkady N. Shevchenko, was at the time the Under-Secretary General of the United Nations. The fascinating tale of his cooperation with United States intelligence and of his ultimate defection, Breaking With Moscow, contains several references to the Cuban Missile Crisis which shed more candid light upon some of the questions left unanswered by his former Soviet colleagues.17 Shevchenko was a Soviet diplomat at the time stationed in the United States. For thirteen days, according to him, the Soviet mission held its breath along with the rest of the world, completely ignorant of Moscow's thinking. They had been told nothing of Khrushchev's plans to place missiles in Cuba and could not explain Soviet policy to Western negotiators or Soviet bloc allies. He later found out Khrushchev's intentions were to create a better balance of power between the United States and the U.S.S.R. by the use of a "cheap nuclear rocket deterrent". By installing the missiles rapidly and secretly, Khrushchev could confront the United States with a fiat accompli against which the United States would not dare strike a blow. After the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Vienna summit, Khrushchev thought President Kennedy was "wishy washy" and did not have a strong backbone nor the courage to stand up to a serious challenge. That impression was prevalent among Soviet leaders generally.

17. Shevchenko, Arkady, N., Breaking With Moscow, Ballantine Books, New York, 1985, pp. 150-6

According to Shevchenko, Khrushchev imposed the arbitrary decision to secretly implace the missiles on his political and military leaders who preferred solid, long-range programs to achieve parity and later surpass America in both quantity and quality of strategic nuclear arsenals. There were no contingency plans in the event the Cuban operation failed and, by establishing a naval quarantine, Kennedy had presented Khrushchev with a fiat accompli rather than the other way around. Khrushchev was thus faced with either a nuclear war or a limited war in which the United States was much better prepared by local conventional superiority in a region in which the Americans had the preferred geographical position. Under such circumstances the Soviets could not penetrate the blockade or defend their ships. After the crisis it was clear that the world had not been on the brink of nuclear war, because neither Khrushchev nor anyone else in Moscow intended to use nuclear weapons against the United States. When the crisis broke, Soviet leaders were preoccupied almost exclusively with how to extricate themselves from a difficult situation with a minimum loss of prestige and face.

A question that has always perplexed Western analysts is why the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, and the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly Dobrynin, assured the Kennedy administration immediately prior to the breaking of the crisis that no such missiles had been installed in Cuba. Although it is somewhat speculative on Shevchenko's part, he

believes that neither Gromyko nor Dobrynin themselves knew what Khrushchev's true plans in Cuba were.18 It is very possible that at least Dobrynin knew nothing about the missiles, because even throughout the crisis, according to Robert Kennedy, he seemed very shaken, out of the picture, and unaware of any instructions regarding either the emplacement of the missiles 19 or response to the quarantine.20

An interesting corollary to the Soviet analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis is the nature of the reporting of the crisis to the Soviet public. Although the Soviet Union vehemently denies that it is engaged in censorship, it is generally recognized that Soviet censorship is designed to prevent the appearance of "harmful" printed matter, restrict the circulation of partly objectionable works, and to purge publications of undesirable passages.21 In a February 19, 1962 Pravda article criticizing the foreign policy of the United States toward Cuba, the author stated that there were no Soviet military bases in Cuba and there never were. This was at least partially truthful at the time it was written

18. Ibid., pp. 204, 263

19. Kennedy, Robert F., Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis, pp.52-3

20. Schlesinger, A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House, pp. 817-20

21. Pedersen, John G., Lt. Cmdr. USN, "Soviet Reporting of the Cuban Crisis," Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 91, No. 10, October 1965, pp. 54-63

because the buildup of Soviet combat power to a total of approximately 22,000 military personnel, equipment, and offensive weapons did not reach its peak influx until mid-July 1962. During the peak of the Soviet arms build-up, both Pravda and Izvestia on September 12th published front page articles headlined "Put an end to the policy of provocation" in which they argued what the Soviet ambassador to the U.N. later also proclaimed that the Soviet Union's missiles were so powerful that there was no need to seek sites for them outside the boundaries of the Soviet Union. Later in reporting the news of President Kennedy's October 22nd public imposition of a quarantine around Cuba to prevent the introduction of offensive weapons, especially missiles, the Soviet press still did not even mention the question of Soviet missiles and bases in Cuba. During the following days, however, Pravda printed large slogans throughout its pages, possibly to orient the Soviet people's thinking toward war:

"Bridle the high-handed American aggressors!"
"Hands off Cuba!"
"Frustrate the criminal intentions of the enemies of peace!"
"We are with you Cuban brothers!"
"Stop this dangerous game with fire!"
"The imperialist warmongers will meet crushing resistance!"
"Messrs Imperialist, do not thrust your heads into fire!"
"The ire of kolkhoz peasantry--the angry voice of millions!"
"Defend and strengthen peace on earth!"
"In the interest of all nations, in the name of general peace--remove the danger of war!"
"Angry words from the Soviet people!"
"The peoples of the world angrily denounce American adventures!"
"Hands-off Cuba!"
"We will defend peace on earth!"

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By Friday, October 26th, however, the slogans in Pravda appeared to presage the coming turnaround in Soviet policy:

"Do everything to prevent war! Reason must triumph!"

Broadcasts on the Soviet radio, Moscow Domestic Service, gave only occasional reference to the Cuban affair until the latter part of September. During latter September and until October 26th the broadcasts included a daily diet of denouncing U.S. aggressive actions toward Cuba. The Organization of American States was described as being under U.S. pressure to become its accomplice in interfering in Cuba's internal affairs. The economic blockade of Cuba was to "starve seven million Cubans just because they don't want to be Yankee slaves." After October 23rd, listeners were inundated with the theme of a planned U.S. attack on Cuba and, when the Soviet Union could no longer conceal its actions without great difficulty, brief reference was made to a "mythical concentration of communist rockets in Cuba," which nevertheless stoutly maintained that "our country has not sent and is not sending Cuba any offensive type weapons." After the confrontation was over by October 30-1, Pravda and Isvestia were congratulating the Soviet government for the calm and wisdom it had shown in resolving the crisis and claimed that:

> In an hour of trial mankind saw once more that the Soviet Union unswervingly follows the Leninist policy of preserving and strengthening peace, and that this policy has become a powerful barrier to aggressors..."

Gradually the Cuban crisis worked its way to the back pages

of the Soviet newspapers. It is therefore apparent that not only the common Soviet citizen, but also the student, the scholar, and even the diplomat, have at least until perhaps very recently been denied objective news reporting and a reasonably full access to the facts from which objective study and analysis could begin.

There are signs that the Soviet Union may be permitting a more objective and open analysis of the crisis to try to learn from it. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the crisis in October of 1987 under the auspices of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, key Soviet scholars met with their American counterparts and actual participants in the crisis.22 More recently in February of 1989 under the cautious relaxation of restraint under Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika, senior U.S., Soviet, and Cuban diplomats met in Moscow to reconstruct the crisis.23 Conferences such as those have highlighted the gross misperceptions that each side had of the other. How deep an inquiry will be allowed by perestroika into the Soviet military and diplomatic archives on the management of the crisis remains to be seen.

Both sides have certainly learned that crises such as the one of October 1962 must be avoided. The lack of a

22. Garthoff, Refections on the Cuban Missile Crisis, pp. 127-8

23. McNamara, Robert S., "The Lessons of October: an Insider Recalls the Cuban Crisis," Newsweek Feb. 13, 1989, p.47

similar one of such serious magnitude for over a quarter of a century gives some cause for optimism that perhaps both sides have indeed learned some lessons from this perilous moment of history.

CHAPTER XIII

"CONCLUSION"

The principal focus of the foregoing chapters has been to provide the response of the United States Marine Corps to the Cuban Missile Crisis in some operational detail. Some background has also been given of the Navy's extensive participation in the crisis. Very little treatment has been given to the quite extensive participation of both the United States Air Force and the United States Army, although they also were key players in the drama. Some additional historical background has also been provided to assist the reader in placing the Cuban Missile Crisis in the context of Cuba's historical relationship with the United States as well as in its historical context within the Cold War which emerged between East and West following World War II.

If any reader has been loyal enough to continue the narrative to this point, he or she must by now have the same questions that American military planners had, including particularly the National Command Authority. Would the defense of Guantanamo have been successful? Would an air strike and/or invasion of Cuban have been successful? Would military action have been successful in deposing Castro and--perhaps the gravest question of all-- would the military attack upon Cuba have precipitated a nuclear exchange between the United States and the U.S.S.R.?

If the reader can muster but a little more patience, I

will attempt to address each of these questions, beginning with the defense of Guantanamo. Nestled between the Sierra Maestra and the Sierra Del Maguey mountains in the southeastern tip of Cuba, it is difficult to conceive of a more strategically inappropriate place from which to commence ground operations. The transportation network connecting the opposing ends of the island were meager at best. The distance between Havana, the capital, and Guantanamo is approximately five to six hundred miles. Any attacking military force would be vulnerable to interdiction along practically every single one of those miles by Cuban and Soviet forces. Even if Cuban regular forces had been neutralized, many of Castro's supporters would no doubt have reverted to the same guerrilla operations which originally propelled them to power. In fact Castro's original base of operations was in the Sierra Maestra mountains immediately west of Guantanamo. The naval base is an excellent port facility, however, and might have had some use as an airfield, if it could have been made reasonably secure.

Even as an airfield, however, bases in the continental United States would have been closer to the Havana area than would Guantanamo. The use of these Florida bases, however, would have invited retaliatory strikes from not only the ballistic missiles but also from the IL-28 Beagle bombers and MIG aircraft. Although most of the discussion in this book has centered on the defense of Guantanamo, had large scale military operations been initiated, the Guantanamo theatre

would have been of secondary importance. In fact, strategically it might not have even been worth the military effort that would have been required for its defense.

The primary strategic objective in any large scale military ground operation against Cuba would have been the capital city. Havana is a port city, a scant ninety miles from Florida and is the principal industrial base of the country. Most of the rest of the country is comprised of agricultural and mining regions. Although little space has been devoted to the subject in this paper since it was beyond the scope of this paper, significant preparations were made for United States Army airborne and armored forces to seize the Havana/Mariel area. The II MEF and the 5th MEB, unless they were absolutely necessary at Guantanamo, would have been best utilized to establish a beachhead in the objective areas of Havana or Matanzas from which follow-on armored forces of the United States Army could be landed. This plan was not without its difficulty, however, as there was a shortage of armored divisions and shipping which were scheduled for the invasion had it been ordered.1 Additional army forces were also scheduled for selective assaults against ballistic missile sites.

Returning, however, to the specific problem of the defense of Guantanamo, there were several other weaknesses

1. CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis, pp. 58-85; Moenk, Jean R., USCONARC Participation in the Cuban Crisis 1962, Headquarters U.S. Continental Army Command, Ft. Monroe, Virginia 1962, pp.126-30

in its defense which could never have been remedied without launching offensive operations from it. The principal problem was its small size, only 5 x 9 miles, which effectively prevented any defense in depth. That tiny size was further bisected by Guantanamo Bay making mutual reinforcement of forces on opposing sides of the bay extremely difficult. Furthermore, particularly on the east side of the base, the base could always be under observation and was vulnerable from attack from higher key terrain to the east.

Guantanamo was equipped with two good airfields, but these would also have been vulnerable to ground, air, and artillery attack. Even artillery or rocket fire alone could have completely incapacitated both airfields, thereby severely hampering resupply efforts.

Another major problem was the lack of adequate fire support. Previous chapters have detailed the relative weaknesses of the Marines' available fire support. There was significant naval gunfire support available, but, except for the cruisers, its range at least north of the base was limited without steaming into the relatively confined water of Guantanamo Bay. The air support available from fixed bases in the east, from Guantanamo itself, and from the carriers offshore would have been formidable, and would undoubtedly have drastically reduced the fire support available to the enemy.

Because of all of these factors, Guantanamo was vulnerable to a determined attack. As the reinforcement progressed, however, this vulnerability decreased. In order to adequately secure the base, it would probably have been necessary to expand its defensive perimeter by limited offensive operations. But to use even an expanded Guantanamo defense area as a base for larger scale offensive operations against Cuba would have been a diversion of critical combat power away from the most strategic theatre at Havana.

The Guantanamo defensive operation did, however, have some "chips." The rapid reinforcement of the base, the evacuation of civilian dependents, and the rapid placement on a war footing were indispensable to Guantanamo's effective defense. Its greatest asset was its high degree of moral and political commitment by the President, Congress, and the nation. Support was also strong among our western allies as well as among the members of the Organization of American States and many other third world countries. It is an oft-debated question whether international support would have continued had offensive military action been undertaken against Cuba. International and domestic support would probably have remained buoyant for a reasonably successful military operation to have been completed if the Havana area were fairly rapidly secured.

In any sustained action against Cuba the United States Navy could have effectively isolated the island from the outside world. The quarantine which was put into effect

prohibited the introduction of offensive weapons only, but in the event of war the "screws" could have been "tightened". Furthermore any offensive action against Cuba would almost certainly have been preceded by massive preemptive air strikes against not only the ballistic missile sites, but also the airfields hosting Soviet MIGs and IL-28 bombers and the tiny Cuban naval bases at Banes and Mariel. The Soviet navy would have been virtually powerless and alone to attempt to prevent any significant action. Its only practical naval capability was its submarines. They might have scored some successes, but the anti-submarine capability of the U.S. Navy, as demonstrated during the crisis, was impressive, and while it would have been difficult to completely eliminate any submarine threat, the threat would have been greatly minimized.

Another significant factor would have been the large emigre base which was then available and eager to be utilized in operations to liberate their homeland from Castro's grip. Not only could they have been employed in unconventional warfare operations, but they could also have provided some moral justification for an invasion in the form of a government-in-exile or as the core of a "revived" Brigade 2506 around which to rally and recruit support from other Cubans.

Morale in the United States military at that time was very high. Throughout all of the records reviewed, there are references to the excitement and high state of morale of the

Marines involved as they were being called upon to participate in an actual mission to combat a direct security threat to their American homeland. In 1962 there was no "Vietnam syndrome" hesitation which continually plagues our country in any contemplated military response to current contingencies. One must wonder, incidentially, whether a "bloody nose" in Cuba, even if the island had been secured, would have given the country a distaste to intervene in Vietnam because of fear of "another Cuba."

In reviewing all of the factors, it is difficult to see how the defense of Guantanamo could ever have been a military defeat. There was certainly confusion in establishing the initial reinforcement of the base prior to President Kennedy's announcement of the quarantine, but, overall, the reinforcement operation itself was remarkably successful and well coordinated. The naval and air supremacy and the close proximity to the continential United States makes it difficult to conceive of Guantanamo ever being anything worse than another Pusan Perimeter. It might have become bloodied or beleaguered but ultimately would certainly have been victorious.

Related to the specific question of the defense of Guantanamo is the broader question of whether a military response was proper at all following the discovery of ballistic missiles in Cuba. At the recent conference in Moscow in February, 1989 attended by such senior Soviet, Cuban, and United States officials who had participated in

the Cuban Missile Crisis, including such men as former Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, Fidel Castro's politiburo member Riske: Valdez, and Robert McNamara, the Secretary of Defense during the Kennedy administration, all agreed that both sides dr:tically misjudged the other. America misjudged Soviet intentions on the original emplacement of the missiles. The Soviets believed they could secretly introduce the missiles and that when they were installed, we would not respond. The Soviets and Cubans believed that the United States intended to invade Cuba prior to the crisis, but we had no such intent.2 With the misinformation and history of mistrust, the recipe was disaster.

If the Soviets intended to address the strategic nuclear balance, their Cuban plans were a failure. As twenty-five more years of history have demonstrated, nuclear war has been averted without the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba. If the Soviets' intention was to deter an invasion, their plans could then be considered to be a success, although it is doubtful that a conventional military operation would have been undertaken against Cuba even if the missiles had never been emplaced or discovered.

However, it is curious to note that in a number of places in the sources researched, indications were found that the U.S. Navy was at least planning to be ready to implement

2. McNamara, Robert S., "The Lessons of October: An Insider Recalls the Cuban Crisis," Newsweek, February 13, 1989, p.47

CINCLANT OPLAN 312 as early as the latter part of September or the early part of October 1962. This is significant because the presence of the missiles was not discovered until October 16th and the President was not informed until the morning of October 17, 1962. It is not surprising that the military had drafted contingency plans for the attack of Cuba, but it is unusual that the military, apparently upon its own analysis of international events, began undertaking specific plans to be ready to implement a contingency plan to the extent of prepositioning equipment and supplies in the anticipated theatre of operations. More specific research on this question was beyond the scope of this paper concentrating on the participation of the U.S. Marine Corps in the crisis.

It is probable that, had the Soviets not escalated the Cuban Crisis to the nuclear level, there would have been tremendous pressure upon President Kennedy to "do" something about Cuba from the more conservative elements of Congress, the military, and the country. Although there does not appear to be any evidence of specific plans being undertaken to mount another Brigade 2506 type invasion, it was certainly an option. If given even limited conventional military assistance in the form of air or naval support, a second attempt might have been much more successful. Although a "deal" was reached which provided for the removal of the missiles in exchange for a non-invasion pledge, the agreement was never formally implemented because one provision was the

inspection by U.N. officials of the site and Castro refused to permit this. Nevertheless, as a practical matter the United States pledge of non-invasion was honored, even through successive presidential administrations. It is possible that, given the withdrawal of the "military option" following the missile crisis, President Kennedy and his advisors opted for a covert solution, the assassination of Fidel Castro.3

The discovery of the missiles did give the United States a higher level of moral justification to employ a military option to obtain either their removal and/or the overthrow of the Castro government. But was the United States justified in imposing the quarantine and in ordering pre-invasion preparations to be actually implemented? President Kennedy's decision to impose the naval quarantine was undoubtedly one of the most difficult decisions in the post-war era. Particularly in the early days of the Cold War, the U.S./Soviet relationship was very unstable and the likelihood of war was a very present danger. The United States had at least a measure of early warning of a nuclear attack at that time, by the DEW (Distant Early Warning) line in the Arctic Circle. There would have been no warning whatsoever of missiles launched from Cuba which, if targeted at our retaliatory capability, could have destroyed our ballistic

3. Marchetti, Victor and Marks, John D. The C.I.A. and the Cult of Intelligence, Dell Publishing Co., New York, 1980, p.260

missile and bomber forces on the ground before they could be launched. The United States should not have been expected to leave itself permanently vulnerable to such a surprise attack.

The quarantine decision was a demonstration of restraint by a super-power, showing a significant amount of reluctance to utilize vastly superior military force against a weak neighbor, even if that neighbor was openly antagonistic. The quarantine was a measured use of force, which left the way open for escalation, but did not require the United States to "fire the first shot," unless the Soviets chose not to honor the blockade. The only military capability that the Soviets would have to force through the quarantine line were a few submarines. While those submarines could have inflicted some damage upon the United States fleet, any attacking submarine would very likely have been itself destroyed. Any cargo upon any ship, including nuclear warheads, would probably have been seized intact rather than sunk. The quarantine thus left the Soviets with few choices, since they could not reasonably attempt to "run" the blockade.

The quarantine decision, however, was not without its disadvantages. The quarantine left the Soviets free to complete construction of the missile sites. At any time any completed missile could be launched against the continential United States. If the Soviets had wanted war with America, that would have been the time to have almost guaranteed the destruction of Washington, New York City, or any other

targets within range. President Kennedy did minimize this risk by decreeing that any missile attack launched from Cuba would be considered as one launched from the Soviet Union, justifying a retaliatory response. That statement alone, however, could have proved to be disastrous. If a site were about to be overrun by an invading force, would the site crews have launched rather than allowing their missiles to be overtaken by their enemy? Or could Cuban crews have overtaken the sites and launched the missiles themselves, even against the Soviets' wishes, as apparently was the case with the downing of Major Anderson's U-2? It is entirely conceivable that, if Castro perceived his government to be in danger of overthrow, he would have "pushed the button" if he had any way to do so. If President Kennedy had followed through with his threat, then he would have been bound to have retaliated against the Soviet Union for what might not have been an attack ordered by the Soviet national command authority.

Another weakness of the quarantine decision was its forfeiture of the element of surprise. The Soviets did not know that we had discovered the presence of their missiles. After the announcement of their discovery, the alert status of their air defense crews no doubt was raised. That forfeiture of surprise, however, had a collateral benefit. Khrushchev's greatest "hold card" during the crisis was his conventional superiority to attack Berlin or some other European target where the West would have been vulnerable.

By forfeiting the element of surprise, Khrushchev was maneuvered into a position of being an attacker or aggressor himself had he chosen this option.

The concern expressed by many military officers during the quarantine debate within Excomm was its inability to obtain the actual removal of the missiles. Its objective was the voluntary removal of the missiles by the Soviets and, it must be admitted, the West at that time had not been very successful in obtaining the voluntary cooperation of the Soviets to do much of anything.

This is where the importance of the Marines came into play. President Kennedy warned that the quarantine was only the first step. As several of the sources in the previous chapter indicate, the motivating factor for Khrushchev to finally make the decision to voluntarily remove the missiles was his knowledge that an actual invasion of Cuba was eminent. And, by that time, Khrushchev was correct than an invasion was eminent. Within hours of the receipt of an order of the President of the United States to do so, over 25,000 fully supplied and equipped Marines could have stormed ashore at any of several points in Cuba. Airborne forces would have dropped nearby, and air strike forces would have streaked across the skies of Khrushchev's tiny remote ally, destroying much of the assets that it did have with which to wage war. Forces at Guantanamo could have attacked out of their base. The U.S. military response to the Cuban Missile Crisis totaled a quarter of a million personnel, more than the total

which landed on D-Day on the coast of France on June 6, 1944. As Sun Tzu observed centuries ago, the most successful army is the one that never has to fight--its enemies are deterred from waging war with it.

The men and women of all branches of the United States Armed Forces who responded on behalf of their country during the Cuban Missile Crisis can be very proud that the appearance of their combined force "cowered" an aggressive adversary and forced his submission to their country's demands. The immediate result was that what could have been a deadly war ended up being a massive embarkation exercise.

With the threat of an eminent invasion, the Soviets certainly did "blink." But, as Luttwak has noted, the quarantine may have exceeded the "culminating point of success."4 In other words, it might have been so successful in the short term that it motivated the adversary to work harder to "win" the next time, with the result that ultimately the adversary is much stronger as a result of the incident rather than weaker. The best historical example is the defeat of Germany in World War I. The humiliation of the peace treaty was the catalyst for the growth of the National Socialist Party in the inter-war years. In Cuba the Soviet naval "defeat" is given by Soviet naval experts as the motiviation for the construction of a deep water navy which began to be deployed in the latter sixties and now rivals or

4. Luttwak, Edward N. Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1987

exceeds in size the United States Navy.5 It would certainly be much more difficult to quarantine Cuba now against the Soviet naval threat than it was in 1962.6 It seems also to have motivated the Soviets to adopt a "flexible response" capability of their own which would not be so dependent on a massive nuclear response.7

Another broader question in the Cuban context is the propriety of the use of military force in dealing with Latin American problems. It is certainly a laudable goal to try to keep communism out of Latin America. For the more recent part of Castro's 30+ year regime, there seems to have been little internal opposition raised against him. That in and of itself is not a real test of internal satisfaction with his rule, as there is rarely word of internal dissatisfaction with most communist regimes until it erupts into a Hungary of 1956, a Czechoslovakia of 1967, or a Polish Solidarity level. It should be remembered, however, that much of Castro's opposition was allowed to escape to freedom in the United States and was at times certainly encouraged by Castro himself to leave. He was thereby relieved of the burden of significant internal opposition. Although there are now

5. Mitchell, Donald W., A History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1974, pp. 519-20

6. Gorshkov, Sergei G. Red Star Rising At Sea, United States Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland, 1974, pp. 145-6

7. MccGwire, Michael, Miltary Objectives in Soviet Foreign Policy, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. 1987, pp. 3-4, 361-2

signs of some latent dissatisfaction, for decades as a result of United States inaction, hundreds of thousands of people have not enjoyed the freedoms we as well as many others in Latin America take for granted.

But should that be a basis for initiating a war to stop it? Additionally, as a partial result of Cuban-sponsored subversion there is now a communist government in nearby Nicaragua. While Castro was struggling to consolidate his own regime, he was not concerned with exporting his revolution. As America gave up on military opposition to Cuba, Castro was allowed to consolidate his regime in peace to the extent of becoming a moderate third world power which has even sent troops to Africa to fight. Tiny Grenada also fell prey to Cuba's exported revolution, but in that instance swift United States military action averted what could have been decades of terror and lack of freedom under communist rule.8 While the United States decision to invade Grenada was unpopular internationally, it appears now to have been a wise move with little long-term international fallout which even the Soviets appear to have taken in stride. At least the issue does not appear to have damaged the larger issues of Soviet/American relations such as nuclear arms reductions.

The final chapter on Cuba has probably not yet been written. The real battle for Cuba is a battle for all of the western hemisphere. America is very fortunate to have

8. Anderson, Kenneth, U.S. Military Operations: 1945-1985, Crown Publishers Inc., New York, 1984, pp. 181-3

secure, unarmed borders with friendly neighbors. The only near term threat to this benefit is from creeping communist subversion in Latin America. In 1962 Cuba may have seemed to be a tolerable "thorn in the flesh." Fifteen years later Nicaragua's fall to the Sandinistas is now courting a similar tolerance. What about Mexico in another fifteen years?

Certain characterists always seem to follow the rise of communist governments to power. True communist governments are never voted into power by elected bodies or by the people. They are always installed by military force. Admittedly, however, the communist insurgencies have often toppled regimes that needed to be overthrown which were oppressive to the people and corrupt. Almost immediately floods of refugees exit the country fearing the oppression that usually follows. Simultaneously a massive military buildup also follows that the already shattered economy can ill afford. Ostensively the new military machine is to defend against external aggression from the West, but more often than not, it is a tool to deter or suppress internal opposition. The most critical stage for the new communist leadership is the consolidation phase when internal opposition is still present, much of it having been used to overthrow the previous government.

At any rate, if this process begins in Mexico as a direct or indirect result of Cuba's subversion, the United States would have a very dangerous social and security problem on its hands. If that occurs we might look wistfully

back to 1962 and wish we had "bloodied our nose" then, rather than have the problems of Mexico multiplied many times more than Cuba has been. This is not however, an attempt to put the blame for all of Latin America's problems upon Cuba. There are many destabilizing social, political, and economic problems that are endemic of our southern neighbors.

No, the last chapter has not yet been written. But our policies today must insure that, when it is written, military force is an option rather than a necessity. Our military capability to respond must be massive, swift, and flexible, and above all, ready. To be writing about the "Cuban" Missile Crisis is bad enough--may it never be necessary to write about the "Mexican" Missile Crisis.

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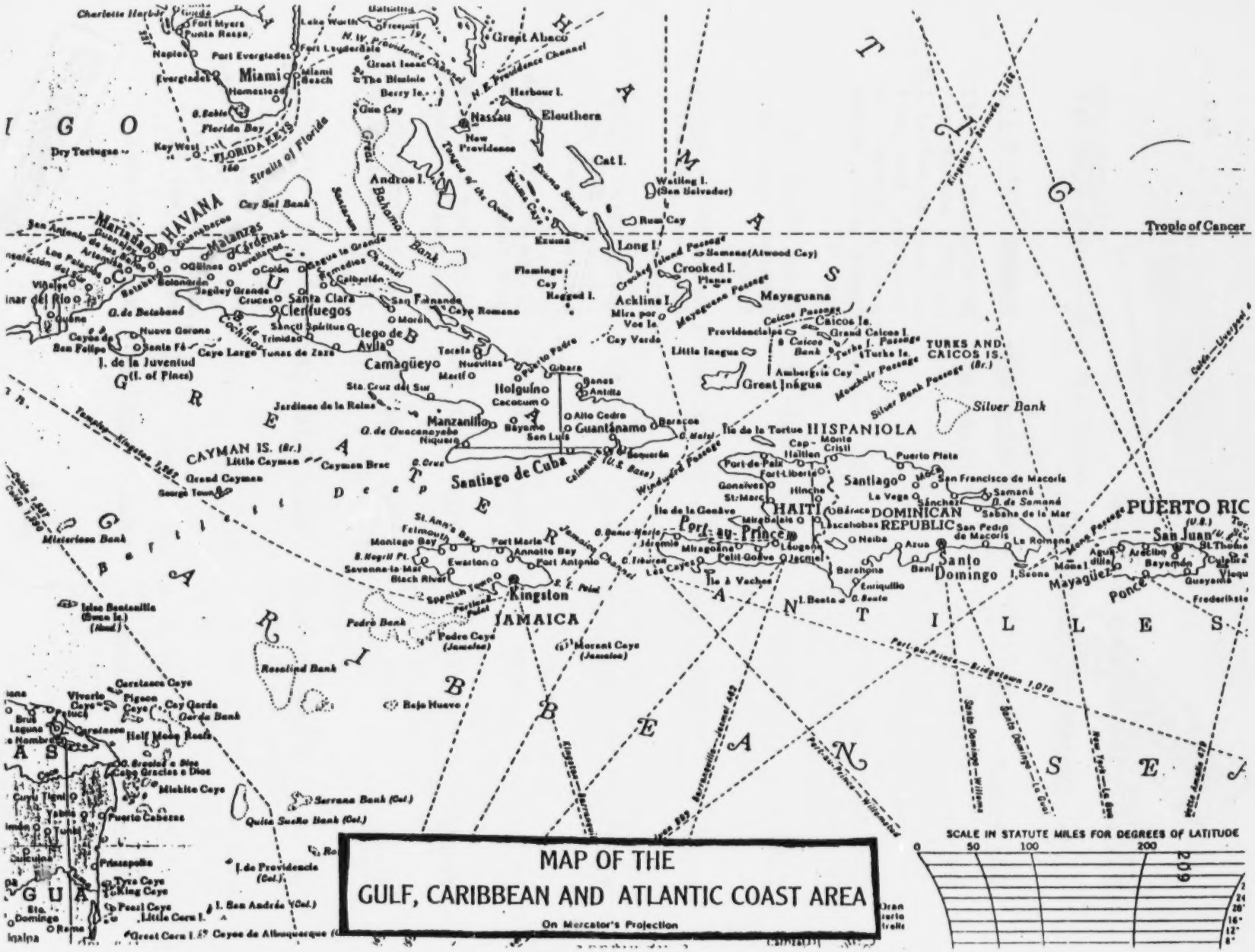
MAP OF THE
GULF, CARIBBEAN AND ATLANTIC COAST AREA
On Mercator's Projection
SCALE IN STATUTE MILES FOR DEGREES OF LATITUDE
0
50
100
200
Tropic of Cancer
HAVANA
Miami
Nassau
Eleuthera
Great Abaco
Andros I.
Cat I.
Long I.
Crooked I.
Mayaguana
Great Inagua
TURKS AND CAICOS IS. (Br.)
Silver Bank
HISPANIOLA
HAITI
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Port-au-Prince
Santiago
Santo Domingo
PUERTO RIC
San Juan
Kingston
JAMAICA
CAYMAN IS. (Br.)
Little Cayman
Grand Cayman
George Town
Santiago de Cuba
Guantánamo
Manzanillo
Camagüeyo
Holguino
Ciego de Avila
Cienfuegos
Santa Clara
Matanzas
Marianao
Florida Keys
Key West
Dry Tortugas
Great Bahama Bank
Cay Sal Bank
Straits of Florida
Florida Bay
Windward Passage
Mona Passage
Jamaica Channel
Yucatan Channel
Caribbean Sea
Gulf of Mexico
Bahama Islands
Greater Antilles
Lesser Antilles
Mosquito Coast
Honduras
Nicaragua
Costa Rica
Panama
Colombia
Venezuela
Cuba
Jamaica
Haiti
Puerto Rico
Virgin Islands
Trinidad
Barbados
Curaçao
Aruba
Bonaire
Grenada
St. Vincent
St. Lucia
Martinique
Guadeloupe
Antigua
St. Kitts
Nevis
Montserrat
Dominica
Tobago
Grenadines
Leeward Islands
Windward Islands
Virgin Gorda
Anegada
Tortola
St. Thomas
St. John
St. Croix
Vieques
Culebra
Mona I.
Desecheo I.
Aguadilla
Arecibo
Bayamón
Caguas
Ponce
Mayagüez
Aguadilla
Fajardo
Humacao
Guayama
Arroyo
Frederiksted
Christiansted
Charlotte Amalie
Road Town
Spanish Town
Kingston
Montego Bay
Port Maria
Annotto Bay
Port Antonio
Ocho Rios
Falmouth
Savanna-la-Mar
Black River
Negril Pt.
Pedro Bank
Pedro Cays (Jamaica)
Morant Cays (Jamaica)
Rosalind Bank
Serrana Bank (Col.)
Quita Sueño Bank (Col.)
Roncador Bank (Col.)
I. de Providencia (Col.)
I. San Andrés (Col.)
Serranilla Bank (Col.)
Bajo Nuevo
Misteriosa Bank
Islas Bonasilla (Cuban Is.) (Mex.)
Swan Is. (Hond.)
Great Swan I.
Little Swan I.
Great Cora I.
Little Cora I.
Pearl Cays
Corn Is.
Corn Islands
Cayos de Albuquerque
Cayos de San Felipe
Cayos de Sabana
Cayos de Ana María
Cayos de Romano
Cayos de Villa Clara
Cayos de Juventud
Isle of Pines
Gulf of Batabano
Gulf of Guacanayabo
Gulf of Ana María
Gulf of Gonaives
Gulf of Venezuela
Gulf of Darien
Gulf of Panama
Gulf of Nicoya
Gulf of Fonseca
Gulf of Honduras
Bay of Campeche
Bay of Campeche
Bay of Pigs
Bay of Matanzas
Bay of Nipe
Bay of Samaná
Bay of Gonaives
Bay of Port-au-Prince
Bay of Jacmel
Bay of Ocho Rios
Bay of Montego
Bay of Kingston
Bay of Portland
Bay of Morant
Bay of Guantánamo
Bay of Santiago
Bay of Cienfuegos
Bay of Matanzas
Bay of Havana
Bay of Mariel
Bay of Nuevitas
Bay of Gibara
Bay of Banes
Bay of Antilla
Bay of Baracoa
Bay of Mole St. Nicholas
Bay of Port-de-Paix
Bay of Fort-Liberté
Bay of Cap-Haitien
Bay of Monte Cristi
Bay of Puerto Plata
Bay of Samaná
Bay of San Francisco de Macoris
Bay of Sánchez
Bay of Sabana de la Mar
Bay of San Pedro de Macoris
Bay of La Romana
Bay of Azua
Bay of Neiba
Bay of Barahona
Bay of Enriquillo
Bay of Jaragua
Bay of Ocoa
Bay of Ocoa
Bay of Neiba
Bay of Barahona
Bay of Jaragua
Bay of Enriquillo

UNCLASSIFIED

Operation Plan
COMNAVBASE GTMO/CTG 84.9 No. 316-62

c. Strength and Disposition:

Hull Number	Name	Dist.	Call Sign	Type	Remarks
Unk	CUBA	West	CMXA	AG	PF size cruizer built in 1911; modernized and used primarily for training. Home port possibly Havana. CO-Carlos Martin Tappen. (Jan 62)
F-301	JOSE MARTI	West	CMZA	PF	Ex-USS EUGENE (PF-40) Home port possibly Havana.
F-302	ANTONIO MACEO	West	CMZB	PF	Ex-USS PEORIA (PF-67) Home port possibly Havana
F-303	MAXIMO GOMEZ	West	CMZC	PF	Ex-USS GRAND ISLAND (PF-14). Home port possibly Havana.
PE-201	CARIBE	West	CMZD	PCE	Ex-USS PCE 872. Home port possibly Cardenas
PE-202	SIBONEY	West	CMZE	PCE	Ex-USS PCE 893. Home port possibly Batabano.
PE-203	BAIRE	Unk	CMXB	PGM	Sunk 19 April 1961. Reported raised and under repair.
GC	Unk	East	CMXC	YF	110 foot coast guard patrol boat; crew of 1 officer and 18 men. Possible home port Antilla or Banes. CO-LT Antonio Venvera Manana. (Mar 61)
GC-102	DONATIVO	Unk	CMXL	YP	Non-operational

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APPENDIX 2

Hull Number	Name	Dist.	Call Sign	Type	Remarks
GC-103	MATANZAS	Central	SMXJ	YP	100 foot auxiliary coast guard patrol boat; reactivated 8 Dec 60. Possible home port Cienfuegos.
GC-104	ORIENTE	West	CMXH	YP	Ex-USS SC-1000. Home port possibly Batabano. CO - ENS Manuel Del Pino Roque.
GC-105	CAMAGUEY	Unk	CMXR	YP	Ex-USS SC-1001; no recent status report.
GC-106	LAS VILLAS	West	CMXF	YP	Hijacked by C/R; Jan 62. Returned to Cuba.
GC-107	HABANA	East	CMXI	YP	Ex-USS SC-1291. Home port unk. Last reported Santiago for repairs. (Oct 61)
GC-108	PINAR DEL RIO	Unk	CMXK	YP	Ex-US SC-1301
GC-11	Unk	Unk	CMXU	YP	Ex-US CGC 83351 (CG-11 to 14 are 83 foot wood coast guard (cutters) Operating west Naval District (Nov 60)
GC-12	Unk	Unk	CMXV	YP	Ex-US CGC 83386; no recent status report.
GC-13	Unk	East	CMXW	YP	Ex-US CGC 833585. Home port possibly Santiago.
GC-14	Unk	West	CMXY	YP	Ex-US CGC 83395. Home port possibly Cardenas.
GC-31	Unk	Unk	CMZI	YP	Ex-US CGC 65189; (GC-31 to 34 are 83 foot wood coast guard cutters; same size as GC-11 to 14 class, but have speed 12 kts vice 18 kts); no recent status reports.

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Operation Plan
COMNAVBASE GTMO/CTG 84.9 No. 316-62

Hull Number	Name	Dist.	Call Sign	Type	Remarks
GC-32	Unk	Unk.	CMZJ	YP	Ex-US CGC 56191; no recent status report.
GC-33	Unk	Unk	CMZK	YP	Ex-US CGC 56190; operating. No recent status report.
GC-34	Unk	East	CMZL	YP	Ex-US CGC 56192. Possible home port Santiago.
SV-1	Unk	Unk		YP	SV-1 to 6 are 32 foot auxiliary patrol craft, speed 18 kts; no recent status report SV-1. Probably operational.
SV-2	Unk	Unk		YP	No recent status report. Home port possibly Batabano.
SV-3	Unk	West		YP	Possible home port Batabano.
SV-4	Unk	Unk		YP	No recent status report.
SV-5	Unk	East		YP	Possible home port Santiago.
SV-6	Unk	East		YP	Possible home port Santiago.
SV-7	Unk	East		YP	SV-7 to 10 are 40 foot auxiliary patrol craft. Speed 25 kts. Possible home port Antilla.
SV-8	Unk	Unk		YP	No recent status report.
SV-9	Unk	Unk		YP	No recent status report.
SV-10	Unk	West		YP	Present status unknown.

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Operation Plan
COMNAVBASE GTMO/CTG.84.9 No. 316-62

Hull Number	Name	Dist.	Call Sign	Type	Remarks
SV-11	Unk	East		YP	Home port unk. Last report operating Antilla area. (Nov 61)
SV-12	Unk	West		YP	Present status unknown.
SV-13	Unk	Unk		YP	No recent status report.
SV-14	Unk	Unk		YP	No recent status report.
SV-15	Unk	Unk		YP	No recent status report.
SV-16	Unk	Unk		YP	No recent status report.
R-41	Unk	Unk	CMZM	YP	Ex-US PT 715; no recent status report.
R-42	Unk	West	CMZN	YP	Ex-US PT 716; home port possibly Batabano.
RS-210	10 DE OCTOBRE	West	CMXN	ATR	Ex-US ATR 54, possible home port Havana.
RS-211	20 DE MAYO	Unk	CMXE	ATR	Ex-US ATR-3; no recent status report.
None	ENRIQUE COLLAZO	Unk	CMXO	AG	Ex-merchantman fitted as lighthouse and buoytender; no recent status report.

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Commander Guantanamo Sector
Caribbean Sea Frontier
Commander, U. S. Naval Base
Guantanamo Bay, Cuba
and
Commander Task Group 84.9

Operation Plan
COMNAVBASE GTMO/CTG 84.9 No. 316-62

APPENDIX II TO ANNEX J

Enemy Air Forces

1. Organization: There are indications that the Cuban Air Force (FAR) may be subordinated to the Army. Within the Air Force the Chief of the FAR at San Antonio de Los Banos as the operational commander maintains direct control over the air arm without delegating command authority to the various base commanders.

2. Airfields: There are more than thirty major airfields in Cuba. Ten of these are class I fields capable of handling jet aircraft. These are as follows:

Airfields	Coordinates	Remarks
Los Canos	20-02N 75-08W	Commercial field for Guantanamo. 8100 foot runway.
Antonio Maceo	19-58N 75-52W	Commercial field for Santiago. B-26 and Sea Fury aircraft have been sighted here in the past. Recently no military aircraft present. 7000 foot runway.
Coronel Pasqual	23-08N	7400 foot runway.
Camaguey International	21-25N 77-51W	Commercial field for Camaguey. 8000 foot runway.
San Antonio de Los Banos	22-53N 82-32W	Major base for Air Force. 7220 foot runway.
Holguin	20-53N 76-15W	Partially completed. Present runway length 8000 feet plus. (Feb 62)

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Airfield	Coordinates	Remarks
Santa Clara International	22-29N 79-55W	Commercial field. 9600 foot runway.
Jose Marti (Ranco Boyeros)	23-01N 82-24W	Commercial field for Havana. 7060 foot runway.
El Jiqui	22-13N 81-07W	8400 foot runway
Campo Libertad	23-05N 82-26W	Headquarters for FAR. 6790 foot runway.

3. Aircraft Inventory:

Type	Number	Description
MIG 15	30-50	Jetfighter; speed 572/sea level; range 430 miles. Max. alt. 50,000 ft; armament 1-37mm, 2-23mm.
MIG 17	Unk	Jetfighter; speed 625/sea level; range 1,100 miles; max. alt. unk; armament 1-37mm, 2-23mm.
MIG 19	1-10	Jetfighter; speed 675/sea level; range 1,400 miles; max. alt. 55,000 ft; armament 2-33mm.
T-33	5-10	Jetfighter trainer; speed 504/7,000 ft; range 1,086 nautical miles/381 kts; armament 2-.50 cal.
F-51	1	Prop fighter; speed 425 kts/22,700 ft; range 1,720 nautical miles/236 kts; armament 6-.50 cal.
F-47	3	Prop fighter/bomber; speed 390/kts/35,000 ft; range 2,020 nautical miles/244 kts; armament 8-.50 cal.
Sea Fury	4	Prop fighter/bomber; speed 390 kts/20,000 ft; range 915 nautical miles/245 kts; armament 4-.20mm, 12-2" rockets; 2-500 lb. bombs.
B-26	10-15	Prop attack bomber; twin engine; speed 250 kts/ 5,000 ft; range 1,490 nautical miles/185 kts; armament 11-.50 cal.

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Type	Number	Description
TBM 35	6	Prop ASW aircraft; speed 235 kts/16,500 ft; range 1,510 nautical miles/128 kts; armament 3-.50 cal; 1-.30 cal.
IL-14 (Crate)	12	Soviet transport type: speed 265; range 1500 miles.
PBY-5A	2	Twin engine seaplane: speed 160 kts/17,000 ft; range 2,214 nautical miles/102 kts; armament 3-.50 cal; 2-.30 cal.
AN-2 (Colt)	9	Soviet prop transport: speed 150; range 900 miles.
C-54 (R5D	2	Four engine transport.
C-47 R4D)	7	Twin engine transport.
C-46 (R5C)	4	Twin engine transport.
L-20 (Beaver)	1	Light prop plane.
H-19 (HRS)	1	Sikorsky helicopter.
CESSNA 310	2	Small twin engine light plane; low wing
HOUND (MI-4)	12	Soviet made helicopter; similar to HRS.
HARE	10	Soviet made helicopter.

4. Naval Aircraft: The Naval air arm has been absorbed by the Revolutionary Air Force. Naval aircraft were formerly based at Mariel Naval Air Station (23-01N 82-46W). The TBM's and PBY's were equipped for ASW patrol, but poor maintenance of aircraft and electronic equipment limits them to daylight visual search.

5. Strength and Weakness:

a. Strength:

(1) Large number of dispersed airfields for potential operation of present aircraft.

(2) Soviet Bloc assistance.

b. Weakness

(1) Inadequate logistics on U. S. made equipment.

(2) Lack of experienced technical personnel.

(3) Lack of highly trained pilots.

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AUTHENTICATED:

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UNCLASSIFIED

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Guantanamo Bay, Cuba
and
Commander Task Group 84.9

Operation Plan
COMNAVBASE GTMO/CTG 84.9 No. 316-62

APPENDIX III TO ANNEX J

Enemy Ground Forces

1. Organization: Cuba's ground forces have been in a continuous state of reorganization and resubordination. This was especially true during the latter half of 1961. The trend of these changes has been in the direction of CASTRO's stated purpose of creating an armed force along the lines of that of a major power. Internal organization follows the usual lines of subordination. There is evidence however, that the armed forces general staff has either been done away with or at least stripped of many of its control functions. The army and militia now report directly to th Minister of the Armed Forces. The division between the tactical combat forces (the regular army) and the Revolutionary National Militia (the reserve and volunteer forces) is becoming more and more nebulous.

a. Cuba is divided into six military districts. These roughly follow the same lines of demarkation as the provinces. These divisions are believed to be for purposes of administration rather than for any tactical concepts. Tactically the Island of Cuba is broken into three areas of responsibility. These are as follows:

(1) Eastern Area - Oriente Province

(2) Central Area - Camaguey and Las Villas Provinces

(3) Western Area - Matanzas, Habana and Pinar del Rio Provinces

b. The exact boundaries of these zones of responsibility are not known.

2. Weapons and Equipment: The Cuban Army and militia have more arms than can be efficiently absorbed by her armed forces soldiers. During 1960-61, Cuba received a great many tanks, artillery pieces, mortars, machine guns, and small arms from the Soviet Bloc. Major items are:

Estimate	Item	Description
25	JS-2 Heavy tank	Mounts 122mm gun; 51 tons; identified by wheels and muzzle brake.

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Estimate	Item	Description
104	T-34 Medium tank	Mounts 85mm gun; weighs 35 tons; identified by five wheels and absence of muzzle brakes.
50	SU-100 self propelled guns	100mm anti-tank gun mounted on T-34 chassis; weighs 35 tons; identified by five wheels, box shaped crew compartment vice turret, absence of muzzle brake.
50	122mm gun	Powerful long range (22,747 yds) gun; identified by long tube and absence of muzzle brake; mounted on dual wheels. Trails of carriage are brought together and two front wheels attached to provide four wheel carriage for traveling.
50	122mm Howitzer	Range 13,000 yds. Recoil mechanism carried in crate below tube, recuperator above tube. Same carriage as the 152mm Howitzer M 1943.
72	85mm anti-tank gun	Powerful, lightweight, dual purpose weapon designed for field and anti-tank roles. Fitted with double baffle muzzle brakes. Range 18,000 yards.
120	76mm	Lightweight weapon designed for field and anti-tank roles. Double baffle muzzle brake. Range 14,545 yards.
30	37mm AA gun	Single 37mm manual drive gun mounted on four wheel carriage. Vertical range 19,685 feet; horizontal range 8,748 yds.
200	Quad 12.7mm AA gun	Four 12.7 machine guns in quad mount on two wheel trailer. Identified by muzzle brake.
200	82mm mortars	Breaks into three loads for pack transportation tube, bipod and baseplate. Range 90 to 3,320 yards.

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Estimate	Item	Description
70	120mm mortars	Transported on jeep or towed. Range 5(to 6500 yards.
500	7.62 light machine gun DP	Light machine gun fired from shoulder with barrel supported by bipod. Readily identified by flat circular magazine mounted horizontally over barrel.
220,000	7.62 submachine gun PPSH-41	Submachine gun fired from shoulder. Readily identified by vertical flat circular magazine mounted under the barrel and by the perforated barrel guard.
Unknown	Czech L-25 submachine gun	Submachine gun fired while hand held. Gun has pistol grip forward of magazines as well as aft.
Unknown	Czech Model 52 rifles	Semi-automatic rifle loaded from clip just forward of trigger guard. Bayonet folds back along right side of barrel
26,000	Belgian FN(T-48) rifles.	Similar in appearance to BAR.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AD - Designation of a destroyer tender ship

AE - Designation of an ammunition replenishment ship

AO - Designation of a replenishment oiler ship

AOE - Designation of a fast combat support ship

AS - Designation of a submarine tender ship

ASW - Anti-submarine warfare

ASWFORLANT - Anti-Submarine Forces, Atlantic

CG - Commanding General

CIA - Central Intelligence Agency

CINC - Commander in Chief

CINCAFLANT - Commander in Chief of Air Forces, Atlantic

CINCARLANT - Commander in Chief of U.S. Army Forces, Atlantic

CINCLANT - Commander in Chief of U.S. Navy Forces, Atlantic

CINCLANTFLT - Commander in Chief of U.S. Navy Forces, Atlantic Fleet

CINCONAD - Commander in Chief of Continental Air Defense

CJTF - Commander, Joint Task Force

CMC - Commandant of the Marine Corps

COMANTDEFCOM - Commander, Antilles Defense Command

COMCARDIV - Commander, Carrier Division

COMCRUDESFLOT - Commander, U.S. Navy Cruiser and Destroyer Flotilla

COMNAVAIRLANT - Commander, U.S. Navy Air Forces, Atlantic

COMNAVBASE - Commander Naval Base

COMSECONDFLT - Commander, U.S. Navy Second Fleet

COMSERVLANT - Commander, Service Force, Atlantic

COMSOLANT - Commander of U.S. Navy Southern Atlantic Forces

COMSUBLANT - Commander, Submarine Forces, Atlantic

COMTAC - Commander, Tactical Air Command

CONARC - Continental Army Command

CONUS - Continental United States

CTF - Carrier task force

CVA - Designation for attack carrier

CVN (CVAN) - Designation for nuclear attack carrier

DD (DDG) - Designation of a destroyer

DEFCON - Defense condition

DEW - Distant Early Warning System

ExComm - Executive Committee of the National Security Council

FAA - Federal Aviation Administration

FMF - Fleet Marine Force

FMFLANT - Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic

FMFPAC - Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

FROG - Free rocket over ground (a type of Soviet tactical missile system)

GTMO - Guantanamo Naval Base

H & MS - Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron

HUK - Hunter/killer operations in submarine/anti-submarine warfare

IRBM - Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile

JCS - Joint Chiefs of Staff

JTF - Joint Task Force

KIA - Killed in action

KOMAR - Designation of a particular Soviet navy fast attack surface craft

LCC - Designation of amphibious assault command ship

LPA - Designation of amphibious assault ship

LPD - Designation of amphibious transport dock ship with a helicopter deck.

LPH - Designation of amphibious assault ship

LSD - Designation of amphibious dock landing ship

LST - Amphibious assault ship designed to land tanks

MAG - Marine Air Group

MATS - Military Air Transit Service

MAW - Marine Air Wing

MEB - Marine Expeditionary Brigade

MEF - Marine Expeditionary Force

MEZ - Military Emergency Zone

MIA - Missing in action

MIG - Designation of Soviet jet fighters named after their designers, Arten Ivanovich Mikoyan and Mikhail Gurevich

MRBM - Medium Range Ballistic Missile

MSTS - Military Surface Transit Service

NAS - Naval air station

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NSC - National Security Council

OPLAN - Operation Plan

OPORDER - Operation order

PHIBRIGLEX - Brigade-sized amphibious exercise

PHIBRON - Squadron of amphibious assault ships

SAM - Surface to air missile

SCAT - Security Control of Air Traffic

SECDEF - Secretary of Defense

SSN - Designation of a U.S. nuclear submarine

SP - Self-propelled

Sinker - Colloquialism for a submarine sighting

UN - United Nations

USAF - United States Air Force

USIA - United States Information Agency

USMC - United States Marine Corps

USN - United States Navy

USS - United States ship

USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VMA - Designation of a Marine fixed wing attack squadron

VMCJ - Designation of a Marine fixed wing reconnaissance squadron

VMF - Designation of a Marine fixed wing fighter squadron

WIA - Wounded in action

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Date	Entry
February 24, 1895	Commencement of the Cuban war of independence from Spain.
April 25, 1898	The United States declares war against Spain.
June 25, 1898	Col. Huntington's Marines and 40 Cubans secure Guantanamo Bay.
July 1, 1898	Historic battle at San Juan Hill is fought.
January 1, 1899	U. S. military occupation of Cuba under the command of General John Brook begins the era of Cuban independence.
June 12, 1901	The Platt Amendment is inserted into the Cuban Constitution.
1903	The United States and Cuba agree to establish a U. S. Naval Base at Guantanamo.
1904	The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine is established.
May 29, 1934	The Platt Amendment is removed from the Cuban Constitution.
January 1, 1959	Fidel Castro overthrows the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista.
January 3, 1961	The United States severs diplomatic relations with Cuba.
January 20, 1961	President Kennedy is briefed on "Operation Zapata."
April 17, 1961	Brigade 2506 invades Cuba at the Bay of Pigs.
January 15- March 26, 1962	Twelve KOMAR fast attack missile craft and six KRONSTADT patrol boats are delivered to Cuba.

APPENDIX 6

April 8, 1962	The surviving members of Brigade 2506 are sentenced to thirty years in prison.
April 12, 1962	Cadre status and organization of 5th MEB is approved.
July, 1962	Russian MIGs are delivered to Cuba.
July 19, 1962	The Soviets begin to build up combat power in Cuba.
September 1, 1962	Seven SAM sites are detected.
September 6, 1962	The number of confirmed SAM sites has risen to ten.
September 18, 1962	Extensive training exercises are initiated by CINCLANT in support of OPLAN 312.
September 19, 1962	The United States Intelligence Board issues a national intelligence estimate concluding that the U.S.S.R. did not intend to place offensive missiles in Cuba.
	Cruise missiles with ranges of 25 to 35 nautical miles are detected at Banes.
September 28, 1962	Two additional cruise missiles with 25 to 35 nautical miles range are detected.
October 1, 1962	CINCLANT directs that by October 20th all feasible means be taken to be ready to execute OPLAN 312.
	The total number of confirmed SAM sites has risen to twenty-four.
October 1-18, 1962	FMFLANT's increased readiness phase.
October 6, 1962	CINCLANT directs that increased readiness be maintained to execute OPLANs 312, 314, and 316.
October 8, 1962	JCS refers SECDEF memorandum to CINCLANT outlining contingencies under which military action against Cuba may be necessary.
October 12-17,1962	The first IL-28 bomber is assembled at San Julian airfield.

October 14, 1962	Missile sites are discovered by a U-2 reconnaissance flight flown by Maj. Rudolf Anderson, Jr.
October 16, 1962	President Kennedy is informed that intelligence analysts have discovered the construction of missile bases in Cuba.
October 18, 1962	CINCLANT requests JCS to transfer a land battalion from Pacific command to Atlantic command.
October 18-19, 1962	Aviation deployments in support of OPLAN 312 to Florida are well under way.
	Guantanamo ground forces forward a list of targets posing a direct threat to the base to the Antilles Defense Command for incorporation into the OPLAN 312 target list.
	JCS directs MATS to transport a reinforced BLT from the 5th MEB to Guantanamo.
October 19-31, 1962	FMFLANT's deployment phase.
October 19, 1962	1st Marine Division receives message from FMFPAC directing that a reinforced infantry battalion be chopped in place to CINCLANT.
	Marine Brigadier General W. R. Collins receives orders from CINCLANT to report to Guantanamo for duty as the ground forces commander.
	BLT 2/1 is formally alerted at 0730 to embark to Guantanamo and is ready to depart by 1600; all attached units are ready to depart by 2000.
October 20, 1962	President Kennedy makes the difficult decision to impose a quarantine of Cuba.
	CINCLANT assumes responsibilities as CJTF-122.

October 20, 1962 (cont.)

CINCLANT issues OPORDER 43-62 which commenced the naval action in support of CINCLANT OPLAN 312; COMCARDIVs Two and Six are ordered into position to execute OPLAN 312

CTF-135 is in position for possible execution of OPLAN 312-62.

CMC orders 3rd LAAM Battalion to deploy to Guantanamo.

CG FMFLANT requests that two attack squadrons from Pacific command be chopped in place to FMFLANT.

One MAG consisting of one fighter and three attack squadrons will be assigned to CINCAFLANT; and one squadron would be deployed to Key West assigned to CINCAFLANT.

1st Battalion 8th Marines deployed from Camp Lejeune to Guantanamo.

October 21, 1962

CINCLANTFLT deploys VMA 225 to the Enterprise from Cherry Point, North Carolina where it remains on alert until December 5th.

CINCLANT directs the Caribbean Ready Battalion (BLT 2/2) participating in PHIBRIGLEX-62 to make an amphibious landing at Guantanamo.

The evacuation of almost 3,000 dependents and non-combatants is ordered from Guanatanamo.

October 22, 1962

President Kennedy addresses the nation announcing the imposition of a naval quarantine around Cuba.

DEFCON 3 is set.

CINCPAC directs assembly of all naval shipping necessary to deploy the 5th MEB.

Virtually all of 5th MEB headquarters have reported for duty. CINCLANTFLT directs COMSUBLANT to disperse all units in Key West to North Carolina or further north and to load with a war time load.

October 22, 1962 (cont.)

MAG 14 arrives at Key West.

MAG 32 headquarters is directed to deploy to Roosevelt Roads to assume operational control of VMA 331 and VMF 333 and the reconnaissance aircraft of 4th MEB

The last increment of BLT 2/1 arrives at Guantanamo.

The installation of an advanced air search radar (TPS-15) at Guantanamo has been completed.

At 0915 BLT 2/2 conducts amphibious landing at Guantanamo in less than an hour, followed by Headquarters Battery of 2/10.

October 22-3, 1962

Cuban army forces are mobilized.

October 23, 1962

Debate at the U.N. commences on the U.S. resolution to dismantle and withdraw the missiles.

The O. A. S. unanimously approves a resolution calling for the dismantling and withdrawal of the missiles.

The 5th MEB is formally activated and is ordered to embark within 96 hours; 5th MEB is also notified that it will be part of Landing Group East in the II MEF.

The headquarters of MAG 32 deploys to Guantanamo and assumes operational control of VMF 333, VMA 331, VCMJ-2 (Det) MASS-1 and four KC 130F's for inflight refueling.

MAG 14 reports to CINCAFLANT with H & MS (Det), MABS (Det), VMA 324, VMA 533, VMA 242, VMA 122, VMCJ-2 (Det); the MAG 14 deployment to Key West includes VMF (AW) 122, VMA 242, VMA 324, VMA 553, and VMCJ 2 (Det).

Two surgical teams with blood supplies arrive at Guantanamo.

October 24, 1962

U.N. Secretary General U Thant sends identically worded messages to Kennedy and Khrushchev.

October 24, 1962 (cont.)

CINCLANTFLT formally issues his blockade order (later modified to quarantine).

Commencement of 1st phase of the quarantine (October 24-November 4) during which many suspicious Soviet ships reversed course.

The first Soviet ships reach the blockade line at approximately 10:30 a.m., but turn back.

The Enterprise and Independence alternate continuous advance early warning patrols over the Windward Passage at the request of the Guantanamo Base commander.

Seventeen VP aircraft and ten submarines are deployed to the naval station at Argentia to establish the Argentia sub-air barrier.

By this time CINCLANTFLT has identified three known submarines operating in the North Atlantic which could reach the quarantine line within a few days.

COMSOLANT is directed to return to Trinidad from Operation Unitas III off the northern coast of Chile with South American naval forces.

MAG 32 is now in position.

MAG 14's units are completely in place ready for air operations in western Cuba under the direction of CINCAFLANT.

VMA 121 and VMA 223 from 3rd MAW are placed on 36 hour notice to deploy to the east coast or the Caribbean with the Atlantic fleet.

October 25, 1962

Kennedy permits the Soviet tanker Bucharest to pass the quarantine line.

The C.I.A. estimates that one IRBM base will be operational by December 1st, and the other two by December 15th.

October 25, 1962 (cont.)

The decision is made to send Charlie Battery of 3rd LAAM Battalion on to Guantanamo; the remainder of 3rd LAAM Battalion will stay at CONUS.

October 26, 1989

Two separate messages are received purporting to be sent from Khrushchev. The first is emotional and Kennedy concludes it is authentic. The second takes a harder" line and Kennedy concludes it is authored by Kremlin "hawks." After much deliberation with ExComm, Kennedy decides to reply to the first message and ignore the second.

Aleksander Fomin, Counselor at the Soviet Embassy proposes a "deal" to John Scali, ABC News State Department correspondent.

JCS directs that planning and preparation for execution of OPLAN 314 be abandoned in favor of OPLAN 316.

Slogans in Pravda appear to temper antagonism toward the West.

JCS direct that planning for OPLAN 312 be suspended and planning be concentrated on OPLAN 316.

COMSECONDFLT issues OPORDER 1-62 establishing TF 136.

The Enterprise detects a radar contact of what is thought to be an enemy submarine.

A naval boarding party from the destroyers Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. and John R. Pierce intercept and board the Marcula.

COMSOLANT's staff arrives in Trinidad.

Guantanamo defense communications have been reinforced by radio backed up by parallel wire communication.

Charter of commercial vessels is authorized for outloading from CONUS.

October 27, 1962

Kennedy formally replies to Khrushchev's first letter received the previous day.

October 27, 1962 (cont.)	According to Khrushchev's later statement to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., Soviet intelligence on this date concludes that an American attack against Cuba will be executed within the next two or three days
	Major Rudolf Anderson's U-2 reconnaissance plane is shot down and he is killed. ExComm considered this a very serious turn of events, as it inhibited further reconnaissance flights.
	A U-2 reconnaissance flight strays off course deep into Soviet air space.
	CTF 135 recommends redeployment of the entire VMA 333 squadron from Roosevelt Roads to Guantanamo but CG FMFLANT objects, fearing its vulnerability; it is finally decided that eight fighters and four attack aircraft would be deployed to Guantanamo from VMF 333 and VMA 331.
October 28, 1962	Moscow Radio broadcasts the news that Khrushchev accepts Kennedy's deal to remove the missiles in exchange for a U.S. promise not to invade Cuba.
	Task Group Alpha identifies a Soviet foxtrot class submarine
October 29, 1962	Special quarantine plot is established in the CINCLANT Operations Control Center.
October 30-1, 1962	U.N. Secretary General U Thant visits Cuba and during his visit quarantine operations are suspended.
October 31, 1962	A Soviet submarine with the number 911 painted on its tail is forced to surface after 35 hours of continuous sonar contact.
	CG 2nd MAW, Major General R.C. Mangrum, visits Guantanamo.
October 31 - November 28, 1962	FMFLANT's prolonged alert phase.

October 31, 1962	Over 25,000 Marines are enroute to the objective area with supplies and equipment for at least 15 days of sustained combat; 4,500 Marines are stationed at Guantanamo with 30 days of combat supplies either positioned at or enroute to the base.
November 1, 1962	The Army task force completes its relocation to Fort Stewart, Georgia.
	By this time the Marine positions at Guantanamo are well consolidated.
November 3, 1962	The destroyer Mullinnix assigned to be the flagship of the Latin-American task force, arrives in Trinidad.
November 5, 1962	Commencement of 2nd phase of the quarantine (November 5-11) during which outbound ships from Cuba were intercepted and aerially searched with varying degrees of cooperation from their crews.
	Task Group 53.2 containing the 5th MEB arrives at Balboa, Panama and the same afternoon is reactivated as Task Group 44.9 and chopped to CINCLANT.
November 6, 1962	Another new enemy submarine contact made.
November 7, 1962	COMPHIBGRU III, Rear Admiral Johnson, and Brigadier General W.T. Fairbourn, CG 5th MEB, visit Guantanamo.
November 9, 1962	Soviet submarine 945 is observed to rendezvous with the Russian tug Pamir.
	All of Task Group 44.9 has completed transit through the Panama Canal. and is steaming northwest in the Caribbean.
November 10, 1962	Limited celebration of the 187th birthday of the Marine Corps by deployed Marines.
November 11, 1962	Commencement of the 3rd phase of the quarantine (November 11-21) during which some ships continue to be trailed, but no offensive weapons were detected.

November 12, 1962 — Combined Latin American-U.S. Task Force (Task Force 137) embarks for assigned duties in the quarantine operation.

November 13, 1962 — Another new enemy submarine contact made.

CMC, General David M. Shoup, Major General L.F. Chapman (G-4 of the Marine Corps) and Rear Admiral Wendt arrive at Guantanamo.

November 14, 1962 — By this time the total afloat population in all task forces including troops in transit is approximately 100,000 in 184 ships.

VMA 121 is deployed to NAS Cecil Field Florida to replace a Navy CAJ (CVG-10 unit) there.

November 15, 1962 — CINCLANT, Admiral R.L. Dennison, and his Deputy Chief of Staff for contingency plans, Lt. General L. W. Truman of the U.S. Army, arrive at Guantanamo.

Alpha Unit of 5th MEB conducts training ashore at Vieques Island.

Accumulated unprogrammed costs for the Marines to respond to the contingency total $1,333,116; future costs are estimated to be $331,016.00.

November 19, 1962 — Castro agrees that the IL-28 Beagle bombers can be removed from Cuba.

November 20, 1962 — CG FMFLANT, Lt. General R.B. Luckey, Vice Admiral H. Rievero, Commander of Atlantic Amphibious Forces, and Major General R.C. Mangrum, CG 2nd MAW, arrive at Guantanamo.

Alpha Unit of 5th MEB backloads at Vieques beach and steams off to assume its on-station position.

November 22, 1962 (Thanksgiving Day) — Task Group 135.1 is dissolved.

SECNAV, Mr. Fred Korth, visits Guantanamo

November 24, 1962 — Bravo Unit of 5th MEB conducts training ashore at Vieques Island.

November 25, 1962	A catapult launch of a F-8E aircraft results in a fatal accident.
	Cuban forces are demobilized.
November 26, 1962	The special quarantine plot is disbanded after the Soviets agree to remove the IL-28 bombers from Cuba within thirty days.
November 28, 1962	CINCLANTFLT directs the return of BLT 2/1 to Camp Pendleton.
	5th MEB receives a message asking its shipping to consider taking BLT 2/1 from Guantanamo back to California and BLT 1/7 back for further deployment to the Western Pacific (this is 5th MEB's first indication that operational plans may not be executed).
November 29, 1962	CINCLANTFLT directs a withdrawal of forces from the Cuban contingency.
November 29 - December 15, 1962	FMFLANT's stand down phase.
November 30, 1962	The Lexington assumes on-call status from November 30th to December 15th when it is relieved by the Enterprise.
	5th MEB receives word that it will be returned to its home base; that night amphibious shipping arrives at Guantanamo to transport them.
December 1, 1962	U.S. Senator Margaret Chase Smith visits Guantanamo.
December 1-6, 1962	Forty-two IL-28 Beagle bombers are removed from Cuba.
December 3, 1962	BLT 2/1 embarks aboard amphibious shipping ready to proceed to the Panama Canal to return to the West Coast.
December 4, 1962	VMA 115 deploys to Guantanamo to relieve a withdrawing squadron.
December 5, 1962	CINCLANTFLT sets DEFCON 5 for all Atlantic forces.

December 5, 1962 (cont.)	Amphibious shipping picks up the remainder of MAG 32 deployed at Guantanamo except for VMF 115.
December 6, 1962	The Enterprise returns to Norfolk.
	CINCLANTFLT directs BLT 2/2, 1/8, and headquarters RLT-6 to return to CONUS.
December 12, 1962	The redeployment of all reinforcing battalions back to their former stations is complete.
	Khrushchev addresses the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet.
December 15, 1962	Most specially deployed Marine forces have returned home by this date.
	The only aviation contingency deployments remaining are portions of MAG 14 and MAG 32 which are on 48 hour alert for portions of OPLAN 312.
December 24, 1962	The last members of Brigade 2506 are repatriated to the United States.
October 16, 1964	Pravda briefly announces that Khrushchev at his own request has been relieved of all party and government duties because of advanced age and poor health. In actuality he is ousted from power while on a working vacation at his government dacha on the Black Sea.
October 1987	Key Soviet and American scholars meet at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University to discuss the crisis.
February 5, 1989	Senior U.S., Soviet, and Cuban diplomats meet in Moscow to reconstruct the crisis.